

# THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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## THE LIBERTY BOYS' "HOT TIME";

OR, LIVELY WORK IN OLD VIRGINIA.

By HARRY MOORE.



The boats were soon close together, and then a hot fight took place between the "Liberty Boys" and the redcoats. The girl watched the combat in silent terror.



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## CHAPTER I.

### A CRY FOR HELP.

"Help! Help!"

"What was that?"

A young man of perhaps twenty years was riding along the road leading southward toward the South Anna River, in Virginia, in June, of the year 1781. He was handsome, bronzed and clear-eyed as well as possessing a firm jaw and determined air generally. He had been riding along, thinking of nothing in particular when suddenly he thought he heard a cry, and gave utterance to the exclamation, "What was that?" Feeling sure that he was not mistaken, and that he had heard a cry, the young man brought his horse to a stop and bent his head in a listening attitude. He did not have to wait long, for presently there came the faint cry once more:

"Help! Help!"

"I thought so," the young man murmured; "some one is in trouble. Well, Dick Slater, it is incumbent upon you to see what the trouble is, and if the person needs help, to render it."

The young man leaped off his horse, glanced up and down the road, hesitated, and then led the animal into the timber a ways and tied him. "It won't do to take any chances in this part of the country," the youth said to himself; "some of Cornwallis' or Tarleton's men are likely to come along at any moment and they would gobble up my horse in a hurry."

Having tied the animal securely the youth who had called himself Dick Slater—and who was, indeed, that noted scout, spy and soldier, captain of the "Liberty Boys"—walked in the direction from which the cry for help had seemed to come.

When he had traversed a distance of two hundred yards the youth paused and called out: "Hello! Hello! Where are you?"

Immediately there came back the cry: "Help! help! This way; I am here!"

The voice sounded ahead, and a little to the right, and Dick made his way forward rapidly and presently came out in a little ravine, through which ran a shallow stream not more than eight or ten feet in width. Right in front of the youth, sunk to her waist in the stream was a girl of perhaps sixteen or seventeen years.

Dick paused involuntarily and stared in amazement. He could see that the water in the stream was not more than a foot deep; how, then, was it possible for the girl to sink to her waist? Another thing he noticed was that the bottom of the stream was clean, white sand and not mud.

The instant Dick appeared in sight a cry of joy and relief escaped the lips of the girl.

Oh, sir, save me!" she cried. "Save me from this terrible fate!"

"What is the matter, anyway?" asked Dick, striding forward and staring at the girl and then at the sandy-bottomed stream, alternately.

"Oh, sir, this is a quicksand!" the girl replied. "It is pulling me down and down, farther and farther with each moment. Save me, quickly, or I fear it will be too late, for I am held as with a grip of steel even now!"

"Quicksand!" gasped Dick. He understood, now. He had seen the like before, but had forgotten about it till he heard the word spoken. He knew how dangerous a thing quicksand was, and he lost no time.

"I will save you, miss," he said, firmly; "I will have you out of there or the quicksand will get two victims instead of one!"

"Oh, thank you, sir!" the girl cried. She gazed up into the face of the youth and reached up her arms.

Dick took hold of the girl's arms and pulled, gently at first and then harder and still harder. It did not seem to have any effect, and he ceased.

"Did I hurt you?" he asked.

"It hurt a little," was the reply; "but that doesn't matter. What is a little pain as against the loss of my life?"



"Nothing, of course," replied Dick; "but I'm afraid I might pull your arms off and still not be able to get you out. What shall I do?"

"I don't know," the girl replied.

Dick took a more careful survey of the situation. The girl was about two feet from the bank of the stream, but the ground was, luckily, firm and solid right up to the water's edge. After sizing the situation up Dick planted his feet firmly on the extreme edge of the bank and leaned out toward the girl.

"Now lean as far over toward me as you can," he said.

The girl obeyed and Dick reached out and managed to get a firm hold around the maiden's body, just under the arms.

"Now, as I lift, do you press down with your arms with all your might, miss," instructed Dick, "so as to keep my arms from slipping up."

"Very well; I will do so."

"Good! Are you ready?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right; now I will see what I can do."

Dick lifted slowly and steadily, and with gradually increasing force. For a few moments he did not seem to be having any effect, but he put forth all his strength in a mighty effort, and a little cry escaped the lips of the girl. It was so muffled that Dick could not tell what the cry meant, so he asked: "Did I hurt you?"

"No, no!" the girl replied, with a little laugh that was partly hysterical. "No, you didn't hurt me. You pulled me up a little bit!"

"Good!" cried Dick. "That is splendid! That is encouraging! I guess I will be able to get you out of there, miss!"

"Oh, I hope so—and I think so, too!"

Again Dick lifted, putting all his strength into the effort, and again a little exclamation of joy escaped the girl's lips.

"You moved me again, a little bit!" she said.

"All right," said Dick, in a tone of satisfaction; "it is only a question of time, then, before I will have you out of there."

"Be careful that you don't fall in," cautioned the girl.

"That is well said," remarked Dick; "if I were to fall in I guess we would both go down to the bottom of the quicksand—if it has any bottom."

"Ugh!" shuddered the girl.

"That doesn't sound pleasant, does it?" laughed Dick.

"No, it doesn't, for a fact."

"Well, I won't say anything more like that but will use my energy in trying to get you out."

Then Dick took fresh hold and lifted once more—slowly, steadily, and he could feel the girl's body coming slowly upward out of the quicksand.

"A few more trials and I will have you out of there, miss," said Dick, cheerfully.

"Oh, I am so glad! How can I ever thank you for what you are doing for me?"

"I don't want any thanks," said Dick, smiling; "I am only doing my duty, that is all, and one does not deserve thanks for doing one's duty."

"But you will have saved my life, sir!"

"And to do that I consider something that I should be thankful for; so, no thanks are due me, miss."

"I think differently."

"Oh, well, that is your privilege, of course; but I shall not let you do much thanking."

Dick again exerted his strength and succeeded in pulling the girl up two or three inches.

"A few more lifts and I will have you out of there," he said.

"Oh, how glad I shall be to get out!" the girl exclaimed.

Again and again Dick lifted, bringing the girl up out of the quicksand more and more each time, and closer to the shore.

"It is harder on you than on me," the youth said; "goodness, I fear that I have almost pulled you to pieces!"

"Oh, no," smiling up into Dick's face; "you haven't hurt me a bit. And if you had, what of it? As I said a while ago, what are a few pains, hurts, bruises, to the loss of one's life?"

"Not much, that is true," agreed Dick; "but it seems terrible to have to pull—haul a frail girl around the way I have been doing."

"Oh, I'm not so frail, sir," the girl said, smiling; "I am a farmer girl, and am used to work. This won't hurt me."

A few more attempts and then Dick was successful. He pulled the maiden loose from the grasp of the terrible monster and lifted her out onto the shore. Dick assisted the girl to a nearby stone and she sat down to rest herself. Her skirts were covered with the sand and water, but the greater portion of it ran down and dripped off onto the ground. It was not like ordinary mud, at all, and as soon as she was rested the girl said she would go home.

"How came you in there?" asked Dick, indicating the quicksand.

"I had been over to the home of a neighbor, visiting," was the reply, "and was on my way home. This is a short



but, and I always come and go this way. There was a small log across the stream, and we have always used it for a foot-bridge. It must have been rotted nearly in two, for it broke with me to-day and dropped me into the water. Before I knew it I felt my feet in the grasp of the quicksand, and knowing what it was I struggled to free myself; the more I struggled the deeper I sank, and I had about given up hope when you came to my rescue, for I had been in there half an hour or more and had cried out till I was hoarse."

"It was lucky I happened to come along just when I did," said Dick.

"Yes, indeed! Had you not done so I shudder to think what would have been my fate!" and the girl did shudder.

"Don't think of it," smiled Dick.

"Well, I won't, then; I'll think of something more important. I will turn my mind to thanking you for what you did for me."

"No, you won't!" smiled Dick. "I place the seal of my disapproval on that matter also."

"Oh, but you must let me thank you, sir, for saving my life!" protested the girl.

"It would embarrass me to be thanked, miss," said Dick; "and I am not entitled to thanks, anyway, for I have enjoyed this affair very much. I am only too happy to have been the means of rendering you assistance. Now, let it go at that and tell me your name."

"My name is Lucy Linton; and now please tell me your name. I wish to know to whom I am indebted for the saving of my life."

"My name is Dick Slater."

The girl started. "Dick Slater!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Miss Lucy."

The girl gave a quick look around and then asked: "Are you the patriot scout and spy, and the captain of the company of young men known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76'?"

"Yes, miss, I am Dick Slater, the patriot scout, spy and captain of the 'Liberty Boys.'"

The girl seemed struggling with some strong emotion, and Dick, who could see this, watched her wonderingly.

"What is it, Miss Lucy?" he asked. "What is the matter?"

"I—I—really I—I—can't tell you, Mr. Slater," the girl faltered.

"Yes, you can, Miss Lucy," said Dick. "What is it? What is bothering you?"

The girl shuddered slightly and then said: "I have been hating you and all the 'Liberty Boys' for a year; and now

you have heaped coals of fire on my head by saving my life!"

Dick stared at the girl in surprise. "You have been hating me and the other 'Liberty Boys' for a year?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"How is that? I don't understand how that can be. You have never seen me before, have you?"

"No; but I've heard of you, and that is how I came to—hate you—or to think that I hated you, rather, for I see now that I do not; that I could not ever hate you."

"I am glad to hear you say that," said Dick, with a smile; "but what made you think that you hated me and my 'Liberty Boys'?"

The tears came to the girl's eyes as she said: "In a battle up North, a year ago, my only brother, Tom, was killed. In that battle it was told us here that Dick Slater and the 'Liberty Boys' took a prominent part, and we were told, indeed, that the soldiers against whom my brother was fighting when he fell were the 'Liberty Boys.' That is why I have been teaching myself to hate you and your men."

Dick took the girl's hand and pressed it gently. "Poor girl!" he said, "I can understand how you felt about the matter. It is terrible to lose one we love, and it is only natural that we should feel anger toward those who, so we think, are the cause of the loved one's death. I don't blame you for feeling the way you do, and——"

"Oh, but I don't feel that way now, Dick—Mr. Slater!" the girl hastened to say. "I don't hate you; I never did. I thought that I did, of course; but that was because I had never seen you. I hope you won't—won't—hate me now for having been such a foolish girl."

"You were not a foolish girl, Miss Lucy; it was only natural that you should feel as you did; but I assure you, upon my honor, that if my 'Liberty Boys' were responsible for your brother's death they were simply doing their duty to their country in fighting for it to the best of their ability, as your brother was doing for his king. The 'Liberty Boys' are always fair and honorable on the field of battle, and I assure you no unfair advantage was taken."

"I know it—now. Since seeing you I can realize that I had no just cause for hating you and your 'Liberty Boys.' My brother was killed in fair and open battle, and I shall never think of being angry at any one for his death from now on."

"That is right, Miss Lucy; and now I suppose, judging from what I have learned, that you are a Tory?"

The girl colored up. "I—was—a Tory," she said,



hesitatingly, "but from now on I shall not be. You saved my life and—and—I am from this day on, at least, neutral. If anything, I shall lean toward the side of the patriots."

"I am always glad to see the great cause receive recruits," said Dick; "but I would not ask you to take such a stand as would bring upon you the anger or disapproval of your parents—for I understand, of course, that your father is a Tory."

"Yes, he is a Tory; but he thinks the world and all of me, Dick—Mr. Slater, and he would not be angry with me or treat me harshly, even if I were to come out flatly and say I was a patriot."

"Well, I am glad to hear you say that; it would indicate to my mind that your father is an honest and fair-minded man, even though a Tory."

"So he is; and I will prove it to you, for you must come home with me and take supper and stay over night with us. He will treat you with as much consideration as if you were General Cornwallis."

Dick glanced in the direction of the sun. He saw that it was almost sundown. It would soon be dark. Perhaps it would be as well to avail himself of the girl's invitation, he decided.

"How far is it to your home, Miss Lucy?" he asked.

"Less than a mile."

"Very well; I will do as you say. I will take supper with you and stay over night at your father's house. But, I think I shall ask a favor at your hands, though, Miss Lucy."

"What is it?"

"That you do not tell your parents who I really am."

"Not tell them?"

"No."

"What will I tell them, then?"

"We will give them a fictitious name; you can say that my name is—well, say Tom Carroll. That is as good as any name I can think of."

"Very well; if you wish it, Dick—Mr. Slater."

"I think it will be best, Lucy, for this reason: If anything should come up—as the arrival of some British or some Tory neighbors, your father would not be embarrassed if he did not know who his guest really was; but if he knew I was Dick Slater he would feel ill at ease and might even feel that it was his duty to hand me over to my enemies."

"I don't think he would do that, Dick; indeed I know he would not, after what you have done for me, his daughter, whom he loves better than life. But, as you say, it will save him from feeling awkward, perhaps, if he

doesn't know who you really are, and so I will introduce you as Tom Carroll."

"Very well; and now if you feel able to walk we will go."

"Oh, I am rested, now, and can walk very well indeed," the girl said.

She got up and the two walked away, side by side, and scarcely had they disappeared from sight before there was a rustling among the leaves at the edge of the timber twenty feet from where Lucy had sat on the stone, and a young man of perhaps nineteen or twenty years of age stepped forth.

"Aha! so the young fellow is Dick Slater, the patriot scout and spy, and the captain of the 'Liberty Boys,' eh?" the youth muttered. "And they are not going to tell Mr. Linton, eh? I guess that Lucy has fallen in love with the fellow's handsome face, and because he happened to come along and pull her out of the quicksand. Blast to his luck! why couldn't I have come along sooner and been the one to save her? Just my luck—but I'll see to it that the rebel doesn't cut me out with Lucy! Yes, I'll see to it!"

Then the youth plunged into the timber and disappeared from sight.

Danger threatened Dick Slater.

## CHAPTER II.

### DICK AT THE LINTON HOME.

Dick and the girl made their way to the road and Dick untied his horse. Slipping his arm through the bridle rein Dick walked beside the girl, while the horse walked sedately behind.

Ten minutes later they came to a good-sized farmhouse standing fifty yards back from the road. Back of the house were a stable and some cowsheds and cornercribs.

"That is my home," said Lucy.

"So I guessed," replied Dick.

At this moment a woman came running out of the gate. "It is mother," the girl explained; "I should have been home an hour ago, and I judge that she has been uneasy."

"Oh, I am so glad to see you back home in safety, Lucy!" cried the woman, who, as Dick could see, was of a nervous, excitable temperament. "But goodness! What is the matter? Your skirts are soaking wet and covered with sand! What has happened? Where have you been? Answer me at once, Lucy!"



"Now calm yourself, mother," the girl said; "there is nothing to be excited about—now."

"But there has been—I can see it! I know it! What does it, Lucy?"

"Nothing much, mother—I fell into the quicksand at the log crossing, that is all."

"Fell into the quicksand—Lucy Linton, you don't mean to tell me that you have been in the quicksand? And up to your waist! How did it happen? Goodness! it is a wonder you are alive! How did it happen?"

"Well, I came back that way, from Emma's, mother, and when I was walking across the creek on the log, as I have done a hundred times, it broke and threw me into the water."

"Broke?—goodness! And threw you into the water! And you were not able to get out again before being caught in the sand?"

"No, mother; I tried to get to the bank but could not. I found I was in the grasp of the sand, and the harder I tried to get ashore the tighter the sand held me, and it began pulling me down rapidly."

"Terrible! But how did you manage to escape, Lucy?"

"This gentleman saved me, mother," indicating Dick; "I kept calling for help, and when I had been in the quicksand nearly half an hour, and was down to my waist in the sand, the gentleman happened to be passing and heard my cries and came to my relief."

"And you saved her—you saved my daughter, sir? Oh, may heaven bless you for that! What if you had not happened along just when you did? I shudder to think of what would have happened. I should never have seen my darling daughter again!" and the excitable woman seized Lucy in her arms and hugged and kissed her.

"There, there, mother," laughed Lucy, "I am all right now, so there is no need of hugging me to death. You must give Mr. Carroll some of your attention. Thank him for saving my life, mother."

"I do! I do! I thank you most sincerely, Mr. Carroll!" the woman cried, seizing Dick's hands and pressing them warmly.

"Don't mention it, madam," said Dick; "I did only what it was my duty to do. I was and am only too glad to be the means of saving your daughter's life."

"Well, I thank you; thank you sincerely—as my husband will do also, for Lucy is the apple of his eye. Ah, there he is now! Tom, Tom, come here; come at once!"

A man had stepped out of the house and at the words from Mrs. Linton he came hurrying out to the road.

"What is it, Lizzie?" he asked. "Ah, what is the

matter, Lucy? Where have you been to get so wet and covered with sand?"

"Oh, husband, she came within an inch of losing her life!" cried Mrs. Linton. "She fell into the creek, between here and Corbin's, and was caught in the quicksand; and she would have been sucked under and smothered to death but for this gentleman, who heard her cries and went to her assistance!" and she indicated Dick.

"This is Mr. Thomas Carroll, father," said Lucy; "and, as mother says, he saved my life."

Mr. Linton seized Dick's hand and shook it heartily. "My dear Mr. Carroll," the man said, earnestly and with a tremor in his voice, "you are my friend for life! I am yours to command. You have saved the life of my daughter, the dearest possession which I have. I cannot sufficiently thank you for what you have done. Rest assured, however, that if ever the opportunity comes I shall not be slow to repay you for your action."

"I ask nothing, expect nothing, not even thanks, in return for what I did, Mr. Linton," said Dick; "I did only that which it was my duty to do, and which any other man in my place would have done; and, as I told your wife and daughter, I do not deserve thanks. Indeed, I am the one who should be thankful that I was at hand to render the young lady a service."

"Of course, I understand just how you feel about it, Mr. Carroll," said Mr. Linton; "it is the way most any noble-hearted man would feel under the circumstances, but it doesn't lessen the obligations on our part, not in the least, and if ever we get a chance we will try to show you that we know how to appreciate such an action as was yours."

"Indeed, we will!" cried Lucy. "And, father, Mr. Carroll has promised me that he will take supper and remain over night with us. Will you take his horse and look after it?"

"Yes, indeed, Lucy. And Mr. Carroll, we shall be delighted to have you stay with us a week. Don't think of going away under that time."

Dick laughed. "I fear you would tire of me much sooner than that," he said.

"Now, Mr. Carroll, you know better than that!" said Lucy, shaking her finger at him.

"Well, I will remain over night with you, anyway; and we will talk about the other later on," said Dick.

"All right; you go along to the house with the women folks and I will take your horse and put him in the stable and feed him."

"Oh, no; I will go with you," said Dick. But Lucy



seized him by the arm and pulled him toward the gate leading into the front yard.

"You must mind my father," she said, with a smile; "I have to, and you must do so, too. You could do him no good, and he can take care of your horse as well alone."

"You see how I am situated, Mr. Linton," laughed Dick; "I guess I will have to let you go to the stable alone and put the horse away."

"Certainly; that's what I want to do. You go to the house and make yourself at home. I'll be with you in a few minutes."

"All right."

Then Dick and Mrs. Linton and Lucy made their way to the house and entered, while Mr. Linton led the horse to the stable and into it and proceeded to unbridle and unsaddle him and give the animal some feed.

While he was putting the corn in the trough the sound of footsteps came to Mr. Linton's hearing and he looked up to see a rather dark-faced and forbidding-looking youth of perhaps nineteen years standing in the entry.

"Hello, Joe! Is that you?" Mr. Linton greeted. "You gave me a start, for I didn't suppose any one was around."

"Yes, it's me," replied the youth; "but say, whose horse is that, Mr. Linton?"

"Oh, that belongs to a young man who is going to stay over night with us."

"Oh, he is?"

"Yes."

"Who is he? What's his name?"

Mr. Linton gave the youth a look of surprise and replied: "His name is Carroll—Thomas Carroll."

"Humph! So that's what he calls himself, is it?"

"That is his name; and, Joe, he saved Lucy's life."

"Oh, he did?"

"Yes; she fell into the quicksand and he happened along, heard her cries for help and went to her assistance. After hard work he managed to pull her out."

"Yes, I know all about it."

"You do?" in surprise.

"Yes."

"Then why are you asking questions?"

"I wanted to know what kind of a story he was telling you folks, that is all."

"What kind of a story he was telling us?" exclaimed Mr. Linton. "What do you mean? What kind of a story could he tell us other than the truth? Lucy was with him."

"I know; but he won Lucy over."

"Explain what you mean, Joe Shenk!" cried Mr. Linton, sternly.

"I mean, simply, that this fellow is deceiving you. 'Deceiving me?'"

"Yes."

"And do you mean to insinuate that Lucy is a part to the deceit?" Mr. Linton's voice was very threatening.

Joe glanced around as if to see if the way was clear for him to bolt quickly, and then replied: "Yes! I know that the fellow is no more Thomas Carroll than I am."

"Lucy knows he is not Thomas Carroll?" repeated the man, seemingly somewhat dazed.

"Yes."

Mr. Linton hesitated and stood staring at Joe in a threatening, half irresolute manner. Finally he said: "See here, Joe, what do you mean, anyway?"

"Just what I say."

"You say the young man is not Thomas Carroll?"

"That is just what I do say. That isn't his name."

"And you say that Lucy knows it?"

"Yes."

"Then why are they deceiving me in this manner?"

"Because you are a loyal king's man and they were afraid to have you know who the young fellow really is."

"Well, who, in the name of all that is wonderful, is he?"

"Dick Slater!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE VOICE FROM OUT OF DOORS.

Mr. Linton was silent for a few moments, staring at Joe in open-mouthed amazement. Then he gasped out:

"Dick Slater!"

"That's just who he is!" said Joe, triumphantly. He was delighted to note that he had created some excitement in the mind of the man.

"Do you mean the Dick Slater—the one who is a rebel scout and spy, and captain of the company of young fellows known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76'?"

Joe nodded. "He is the same Dick Slater."

"But how do you know this?"

"I heard him tell Lucy so."

"Oh, yes!"

"And now that you know who he really is," went on Joe, "if it should happen that some British soldiers should come along you can give him over into their custody."

Mr. Linton shook his head. "I couldn't do that," he said.



"Why not?"

"Because he saved Lucy's life and is here as my guest."

"Oh, but you wouldn't let anything like that stand in the way or interfere with your duty in the matter," said Joe, frowning.

"Yes, I would. I could not thus repay the young man for saving the life of my daughter." Mr. Linton spoke firmly.

"But he is a big fish—one of the most dangerous rebels of the entire patriot army," insisted Joe; "his capture would be a big thing for the British. Why, there is a standing reward of five hundred pounds for his capture."

"I know that, but I could not think of handing him over to the enemy after what he has done for me in saving the life of my daughter."

"But all is fair in war, you know, Mr. Linton."

The man shook his head. "I cannot bring myself to sink so," he said.

Joe wasn't satisfied. There was a frowning, dissatisfied look on his face. "In times like these I don't think one could be so very particular," he growled. "If the chance comes along to strike a blow for the cause we are interested in I think we should strike it."

"That is all well enough, as a general rule, Joe, but in this case there are circumstances which make such a course impossible on my part. This young man, even though he were Dick Slater ten times over, has placed me under such obligations to him that it makes him absolutely safe so long as he is in my house, and, indeed, in so far as I am concerned for all time. I would not raise my hand against him, nor say a word to expose him, even were there a British soldiers all around looking for him."

"Well, it seems to me that that is carrying the matter altogether too far," growled Joe. "The fellow is Dick Slater, one of the rankest and most dangerous of rebels, and I should say that it was the duty of any loyal king's man to do all they could to get him placed where he could do no more harm to our cause."

"Under ordinary circumstances, yes; but these are not ordinary circumstances. They are exceptional."

"Oh, well, you are the one to say how you shall act, of course," said Joe, sulkily; "I have warned you, that is all. You know who the fellow is that you are harboring, and if you don't choose to do anything toward encompassing his capture, it is your business."

"Yes, that is the way I look at it, Joe."

Then Mr. Linton bade Joe good-by and went to the house, the youth taking his departure. As the reader has

guessed, Joe Shenk was the youth who had seen Dick rescue Lucy, and who had overheard their conversation.

When Mr. Linton entered the house one could not have told by his looks or actions that he was the possessor of startling information which he had not been in possession of when he went to the stable with Dick's horse. He treated Dick as pleasantly as he would have done had he not been aware that the youth was the famous "rebel," Dick Slater. When Dick was not looking, however, Mr. Linton looked him over closely and searchingly, and it must be said that he was very much impressed.

"He may be the rebel, Dick Slater," the man said to himself, "but I must admit that he is about the finest-looking young fellow I ever laid eyes on. He is a true-hearted, noble-souled fellow, or I can't read character in the human face."

Lucy had gone at once to her room and changed her clothing, and she entered the room where Dick was sitting soon after Mr. Linton got there. She had donned her best, as her father and mother saw in an instant, but, of course, Dick did not know it. He did know, however, that Lucy was a very beautiful girl.

"Ah, Miss Lucy, I hope you will experience no ill results from your involuntary plunge into the water and quicksand," he said.

"I have no fear of any ill result," was the smiling reply; "the water was warm and I don't think there is any danger of my catching cold."

"Oh, no; you are all right, Lucy," said her father. "She's a healthy, wiry country girl, Mr. Carroll," he went on, "and a little thing like that will not have any effect on her."

"I hope that you are right about it, Mr. Linton."

Mrs. Linton and Lucy now went into the kitchen and began the work of getting supper, this leaving Mr. Linton and Dick together. The host was very careful not to introduce the subject of the war, as he feared he might embarrass his guest; and he was imbued with the idea of true Southern hospitality and did not wish this to occur, even though he was aware that said guest was a "rebel," and under ordinary circumstances an enemy.

At last supper was ready and the four seated themselves at the table and ate heartily. Dick had not had much to eat that day and was quite hungry, and ate with such evident appetite and relish that Mrs. Linton and Lucy were delighted. They had taken pains to get up a good meal, and were pleased to know that their guest enjoyed it.

"I fear I am showing the appetite of a pig," smiled Dick; "but I had only a couple of crusts and a pint of water



for dinner and was quite hungry, and the supper you have set before us is such an appetizing one that I could not resist the inclination to eat until my hunger was satisfied."

"That is just what we wanted you to do," said Mrs. Linton; "when a woman cooks a meal she wants it to be eaten. She takes it as a compliment on her cooking."

"Well, you and Miss Lucy are certainly as good cooks as ever lived," said Dick; "your cooking reminds me of that of my mother."

After supper Dick and Mr. Linton repaired to the sitting-room, while Mrs. Linton and Lucy cleared up the table and washed and dried the dishes, after which they joined the men and engaged in the conversation.

They had been thus engaged half an hour or so when there came the sound of footsteps on the porch, followed by a rapping on the door.

"Who can it be, I wonder?" remarked Mrs. Linton.

Mr. Linton got up and went to the door and opened it. It was dark out of doors, but by the light of the candle on the table it could be seen that a young man, wearing the uniform of a lieutenant in the British army, stood on the threshold.

"Ah, Lieutenant Winters!" exclaimed Mr. Linton, and Dick, who had a splendid ear, thought he detected a slight lack of cordiality in the tone.

Mrs. Linton looked at Lucy quickly, and Dick did likewise, and was somewhat surprised to see a frown on the girl's face.

"So she doesn't fancy the lieutenant, eh?" the youth said to himself. "That is rather queer, I should say, for, as a rule, girls take to young fellows with uniforms as a duck takes to water."

"Good evening, Mr. Linton," replied the young man addressed as Lieutenant Winters; "I have three men with me this evening, and I thought I would stop and see if there was a chance for us to stay here to-night. It looks as if it might rain, soon, and I am afraid we might get soaked before we could reach the encampment."

"Why, certainly, lieutenant," said Mr. Linton, with apparent cordiality; "we shall be pleased to have you stay. I will accompany you to the stable at once and show you where to put your horses."

"Very well, and thank you, Mr. Linton." Then the lieutenant stepped into the room and bowed to Mrs. Linton and Lucy. "I am pleased to greet you, ladies," he said, with rather a high-flown, grandiloquent air, and he gave Lucy a glance which was intended to have considerable effect, but which did not, as the girl merely bowed in re-

turn, without smiling; and she glanced quickly toward Dick.

The glance of the lieutenant followed that of Lucy, as his eyes fell upon Dick's face a dark look came over his own face.

"So she has some one whom she thinks a good deal of?" he said to himself, fiercely—for the lieutenant was in love with Lucy, and had been there several times already laying siege to her heart. "I wonder who the fellow is anyway?"

While asking himself this question the lieutenant stepped back out of doors and Mr. Linton followed and closed the door after him.

"I don't like that Lieutenant Winters, mother," said Lucy, with a sigh of relief when the door had closed.

"He seems to be a very pleasant young man," said Mrs. Linton, "and quite handsome—don't you think so, Mr. Carroll?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Dick.

"I can't help it; I don't like him, and I wish he would stay away from here," said Lucy.

"I don't think he is to be blamed for coming," said Dick, with a smile; "it seems only natural that he would do so, after having once seen you, Miss Lucy."

The girl shook her finger at Dick, but there was such a look of pleasure on her face that the youth, when he noted it, was suddenly struck by a thought which to most young men would have been pleasing, but which was the reverse in his case. Might he not be saying things that would lead this beautiful girl to learn to think too much of him? Dick had a sweetheart back in New York State, sweet Alice Estabrook, and he would never forgive himself if he should, in any way, encourage this girl to think more of him than of a mere friend.

"You must not flatter me, Mr. Carroll," said Lucy.

"There is no flattery about it," said Dick, soberly; "it is the truth and nothing but the truth."

Dick was very careful what he said, after that; and he talked and laughed in a lively fashion, addressing as much of his conversation to Mrs. Linton as to Lucy.

Presently the footsteps of Mr. Linton and the redcoats were heard, and a few moments later they entered the house, and Mr. Linton introduced Dick and the lieutenant. The two shook hands, but there was not much warmth in their greeting; the lieutenant was jealous, and looked upon Dick as a rival, so he could not be expected to show much warmth, and as Dick did not have any use for redcoats, he did not enthuse much, either.

Mr. Linton was in somewhat of a quandary. He knew



that Dick was a patriot, but while he was a king's man himself he owed the youth such a debt of gratitude for saving Lucy's life that he did not want the young man to get into any trouble; yet here were four British soldiers, and if they should become suspicious that the youth who called himself Thomas Carroll was a "rebel," then there would be trouble. Of course, he thought that in case anything should happen the youth would get the worst of it, for to Mr. Linton's way of thinking one could not hope to cope with four, and while he would much prefer that nothing should happen to Dick he could not, of course, take his part against the soldiers of the king, to whom he was a loyal subject. It will be seen, therefore, that Mr. Linton's position was awkward and uncomfortable, but he made up his mind to use all the tact possible and prevent trouble, if such a thing could be done.

"Mr. Carroll is a traveler," Mr. Linton explained; "he is traveling southward, and this afternoon he was so fortunate as to save the life of Lucy, here." Then he went on and related the story of Dick's rescue of Lucy from the quicksand.

"Oh, blazes!" thought Lieutenant Winters. "That does settle it, sure enough! He is good-looking and dashing in appearance and saved Lucy's life. She will love him, of course, if she does not already, and I think I see my chances going glimmering."

Aloud he said: "Mr. Carroll was indeed fortunate! Would that I might have been so lucky."

"Well, I'm not going to fall into the quicksand again to give some one else a chance to pull me out," laughed Lucy.

"That is cruel of you, Miss Lucy," said the lieutenant. "I will promise to ride up and down the road, constantly, all day to-morrow if you will only go through with that experience again."

"I think I shall have to decline," with a laugh; "one such experience is enough for me, and your army needs your services too greatly to permit of your wasting your time riding up and down a country road, waiting for a chance to save the life of a girl."

"Oh, to the deuce with the army!" growled the lieutenant. "It doesn't need my help. There are no rebels in these parts, and I might as well put in my time saving the lives of maidens as in any other way."

"Mr. Carroll has just come down from the northward," said one of the other redcoats; "perhaps he can give us some information."

"That's so," said the lieutenant. "Did you see anything of any rebels, Mr. Carroll?"

Mr. Linton looked at Dick with a somewhat anxious expression on his face, for he feared that trouble was brewing; and as for Lucy, she turned pale. She, too, feared that trouble might be brewing, and, like her father, she thought that Dick Slater, even though a young man with a wonderful reputation as a fighter, would not be a match for four British soldiers. They did not know how Dick might reply to the lieutenant, but they were quickly reassured, for the youth smiled and replied, quietly:

"No, I did not see any rebels, lieutenant."

"None at all, eh?"

"Not a one; that is, so far as I know. But perhaps I wouldn't know one if I was to see him."

"Oh, I guess you would. I have no doubt that rebels are scarce. That young Frenchman, Lafayette, is scared to death and keeps as far away from us as he possibly can. Which is the most sensible thing he can do, though, for we would make short work of him and his force if we could once get a chance at it."

"Well, it is a sign of good generalship, they say, when a commander with an inferior force avoids being forced to offer battle to a superior force," remarked Dick, quietly.

"Well, it may be good generalship, but it savors more of cowardice, to my way of thinking," said the lieutenant, arrogantly.

"From all I have been able to gather, Lafayette is not a coward," said Dick, calmly; "and any one who thinks he is will be likely to find themselves mistaken, sooner or later."

"Bah!" sneered the lieutenant. "I would not be afraid to fight the entire force under Lafayette with one British regiment. You seem to hold up for Lafayette and the rebels, however," with a suspicious look. "Why is that?"

"It is because he is a rebel himself!" called out a voice, coming from out of doors, seemingly, but being plainly audible. "That fellow, Lieutenant Winters, is no other than Dick Slater, the notorious rebel scout, spy and captain of 'The Liberty Boys of '76'!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### A TERRIBLE COMBAT.

A cry of dismay escaped the lips of Lucy. "That sounded like the voice of Joe Shenk!" she said to herself. "Oh, I fear Dick is in great danger!"

An exclamation of anger and vexation escaped the lips



of Mr. Linton. He knew it was the voice of Joe Shenk, and he most heartily wished the youth had stayed away and attended to his own business.

A curse escaped the lips of Lieutenant Winters, and exclamations from his three men. The lieutenant leaped to his feet and glared at Dick, with fierce eyes.

"Is that true, you young scoundrel?" he cried, fingering the hilt of his sword. "Speak; is that true? Are you the rebel scout and spy, Dick Slater?"

"Of course he is!" came the voice. "What's the use of asking him; he'll deny it. But he is Dick Slater, just the same!"

Dick was the coolest person in the room; in fact, he was the only one who seemed to preserve his equanimity. There was a grim look on his face, however, and in his eyes, and his teeth came together with almost a click as the lieutenant applied the epithet of scoundrel to him. Still, even at that he did not give way to outward show of excitement or anger. Instead, he said, in a firm, cool tone: "Lieutenant, you forget that we are both the guests of Mr. Linton, here, or you would not apply epithets to me. Were we out of doors I would quickly resent the insult in proper manner."

"What would you do?" sneeringly.

"I would first ask you to retract, and if you refused to do so I would——"

"What?"

"Put a bullet through your heart, or cut your head off!"

A snarl of rage escaped the lips of the lieutenant, and he drew his sword and leaped forward. He was a hot-tempered fellow and did not seem to have the least thought of where he was. Dick believed that his life was in danger, and whipped out a pair of pistols and leveled one at the young officer.

"Back!" cried Dick. "Don't come a step nearer or I will be forced in self-defense to put a bullet through you. Mr. Linton, I beg you to bear witness that this show of arms, while your guest, is forced upon me."

"I see that such is the case, Mr. Carroll," was the reply; "and I do not blame you, as self-preservation is the first law of nature."

"Then you are upholding this rebel, Mr. Linton?" cried the lieutenant.

"I do not know that he is a rebel," was the prompt reply; "in truth, I do not believe he is. I am confident that he is what he claims to be—Mr. Carroll, a traveler. He is my guest, the same as you are, lieutenant, and I beg that you will refrain from bringing on a combat."

"That fellow is Dick Slater, the rebel spy!" came again,

in the mysterious voice. "And you know that he is Linton, and so do you, Miss Lucy!"

"Ha! I thought so!" cried the lieutenant. "You Dick Slater, and you must surrender or die! Drop pistols and surrender, you rebel dog!"

"Never! you redcoat hound!" cried Dick, defiantly. "you are wise you will not bring on a combat!"

"What's that! You call me a hound?" the lieutenant almost yelled. "By all the furies, but I'll have your for that, you young scoundrel!" and he leaped forward drawing back to make a deadly thrust with the sword he did so.

Dick knew there was no escaping a clash. The lieutenant was too hot-headed to listen to reason, and as Linton had said, self-preservation was the first law of nature, so just before the lieutenant was in thrusting tance, Dick fired.

Down went the young officer, with a gasping cry. The bullet had been true aimed and went through the lieutenant's head, killing him instantly; and as the other two leaped forward Dick fired another shot from his remaining pistol and dropped one of the three.

This second catastrophe caused the remaining two to halt an instant, in horror, and it gave Dick just time enough to leap forward and seize the sword that had been in the lieutenant's hand, but which he had dropped as he fell. With this weapon in his hand Dick felt reasonably safe, and he took up a position for defense and faced the two redcoats, undauntedly.

Meanwhile there was considerable excitement among the other occupants of the room. At the beginning of hostilities, and just as Dick shot the lieutenant dead, Mrs. Linton and Lucy had uttered screams, and when the lieutenant went down the elder woman, who was nervous and excited by nature, anyway, fainted and her husband went to her assistance. Lucy had brought some water, in a mechanical fashion, on being told to do so by her father, but she had not taken her eyes off Dick and his opponents while engaged. Now she stood staring, her hands clasped, a look of fear on her face, and it was evident that she was afraid that Dick would fall before the two redcoats, either of whom she thought might be a match for the youth.

"Kill him! Kill the rebel!" called out the mysterious voice. "See what he has done—killed two of your comrades, one of them your lieutenant. Kill him! Run him through!"

"Why don't you come in and help do it, you coward sneak?" cried Dick, scathingly.

Joe Shenk heard what Dick said and gritted his teeth.



in rage, but he made no move toward entering the house and helping the redcoats. Somehow he had gotten the idea that it would be dangerous work. He was beginning to believe that any one who came into contact with Dick Slater in an unfriendly way would have their work cut out for them.

Dick's words roused the two redcoats to a realization of the fact that there was work ahead of them, and, sword in hand, they advanced. As they came on Dick watched them with the eyes of a hawk, and was ready to meet their attack when it should come.

Lucy was watching them, too, and suddenly she cried

"Cowards! You are two to one! Shame, shame! Cowards!"

"Never mind, Miss Lucy," said Dick, calmly; "they are four to one a few moments ago and they will soon be none to one. I have no fear regarding the result of this affair."

"Oh, you haven't, eh?" cried one of the redcoats, fiercely, and he made a quick step forward and lunged at Dick.

Then something happened. Dick struck the sword aside as if it had been made of a lath, and with a quick step forward he ran the redcoat through.

The fellow gave utterance to a gasping cry, dropped the sword clattering to the floor and fell upon his face, dead. The other redcoat then attacked Dick furiously, but the latter was ready, and easily defended himself, even though his opponent was a good hand with the sword; indeed, Dick presently took the offensive and began pressing the other back, slowly but surely.

As this was essentially a case where it was either kill or be killed, Dick would no doubt have run the remaining redcoat through, but Joe Shenk, who was watching affairs with starting eyes, bethought himself that he might save the life of the last one of the quartette, and he hastened to the door, and, throwing it open, called out to the redcoat: "The door is open; make your escape!"

With a cry of joy the redcoat leaped backward, through the doorway, whirled, sprang across the porch and disappeared in the darkness, going at a speed that would have made it a difficult matter to catch him, even had Dick tried to do so, which he did not.

"That was Joe Shenk's work!" cried Lucy. "But for him you would have killed all four of them, Dick—I mean, Mr. Carroll."

"It is just as well as it is, Miss Lucy," said Dick; "I have triumphed, just the same, and have killed three of them; let the fellow go. I would like, however, to get a

chance at this Joe Shenk, as you call him." As Dick was speaking he stood in the doorway and peered out into the darkness.

"Oh, you would, would you?" hissed Joe Shenk himself. He had paused forty or fifty feet distant and was looking back and could see Dick plainly.

"Yes, he was the cause of all the trouble," said Lucy; "if he hadn't called out that you were Dick Slater, the lieutenant and his men would not have attacked you."

"You are right. Who is Shenk, anyway?"

"He is the son of one of our neighbors, and lives about a mile away."

"Humph! So that's who he is, eh?"

"Yes; but hadn't you better come out of the doorway, Dick—Mr. Carroll? The soldier or even Joe might shoot you down."

"I don't know but that is good advice, Lucy, and I will do as you suggest." Dick turned away, and as he did so there came the sharp crack of a pistol and a bullet struck the door not a foot from Dick's head.

A little scream escaped Lucy, and she cried: "Oh, are you hurt?"

Dick shook his head. "No; the bullet missed me a foot," he replied. Then he closed the door and barred it.

"Mr. Carroll, will you help me carry Mrs. Linton to her room?" Mr. Linton asked.

"Certainly, sir," replied Dick. "She has not come to yet?"

"No; and I don't want her to do so—in here," with a significant motion toward the stark and bleeding forms of the dead redcoats. She would simply faint again, or perhaps even go off into hysterics or convulsions. It will be best to get her to her room and then bring her to."

"That will be the best plan, certainly."

Dick and Mr. Linton lifted the unconscious woman and carried her out of the room and upstairs to her bedroom, Lucy following, and bringing water and the camphor bottle.

Mrs. Linton was placed on the bed and then all three went to work to bring her to. They succeeded, presently, and the woman came to, with a little cry of terror, and her body trembled violently.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, gaspingly, "they were fighting—shooting and cutting one another down! Oh, it was terrible! Where are they? Where am I? Are all dead?"

"Oh, no, mother," said Lucy, smoothing her mother's forehead, "they were not all killed. It is all over now and you have nothing to fear."



"W-where is Mr.—Mr.—Carroll? Was he—was he—killed?"

"No; I am here, alive and well, Mrs. Linton," replied Dick, stepping forward so that she could see him.

"Oh, I am so glad! But the—the—British soldiers—surely you did not kill all of them?"

"No, I didn't kill all of them," replied Dick; "but you had best be quiet, Mrs. Linton. The trouble is all past and all is well. You lie here and be quiet, with Lucy to keep you company, while Mr. Linton and I go down and keep a lookout to see that the British do not come back and try to make another attack on me."

"Oh, go on, if you wish," Mrs. Linton said; "I shall be all right now. I am feeling almost as strong as ever."

"If you should want me, call, and I will come," said Mr. Linton as he followed Dick from the room.

"Very well, father," replied Lucy.

Dick and his host went down into the sitting-room and made an examination of the three redcoats. They were each and every one dead as a herring.

"We must get the bodies out of here and give them burial," said Dick, and Mr. Linton coincided in this view of the case.

They lost no time, but went to work and carried the forms, one after the other, out into the back yard and then over to the edge of the timber, back of the barn lot. A spade was procured and they took turns at digging, and soon had a good-sized excavation. When it was large and deep enough the three bodies were placed therein and covered over, after which the two made their way back to the house and entered.

Here was another task—that of washing up the bloodstains; and they went to work at this with a will. Mr. Linton brought in some sand, and by using soft soap and sand, and plenty of water, they managed to erase all the bloodstains.

"There," said Mr. Linton, finally, with a sigh of satisfaction, "one could not tell by looks that there had ever been a tragedy enacted in this room."

"You are right," agreed Dick. "I am very sorry that the affair happened, Mr. Linton. I assure you that I would much rather that there had been no encounter between the British soldiers and myself."

"I am sure of that, Mr. Carroll; and I do not blame you. It was that young idiot, Joe Shenk, who caused all the trouble."

"Yes; and as is usually the case he escaped without getting into any of the trouble himself."

"Yes, like the coward that he is."

"I hope to meet Mr. Shenk, one of these days," it sh  
Dick, quietly, "and then I shall try to reward him forry  
part he had in this unpleasant affair."

Joe Shenk, who was at that moment at the window light  
his eye at a crack, looking in and listening intentl  
what was being said, made a grimace and said to him  
"Oh, you will, will you, Dick Slater? Well, I shall m  
to make it my business to keep out of your way, for j  
ing by what I have seen you do to-night it wouldn't On  
healthy for a fellow about my size to come in contact, su  
you."

Which showed that Joe was wise in some respects.

## CHAPTER V.

JOE SHENK AND BILL GOOGER.

Having finished their work, Dick and Mr. Linton w  
upstairs to see how Mrs. Linton was feeling. She aid  
about as well as ever, she said, and so all went back doffe  
stairs to the sitting-room.

Mrs. Linton shuddered a bit as she entered the room, ne  
as she could see nothing to remind her of the tragedy wh  
had taken place there an hour before, she soon recove  
almost her usual equanimity. Lucy was a bit more so  
than she had been, and Dick wondered if she really l  
cared something for Lieutenant Winters, after all.

The four conversed perhaps half an hour and then he  
tired for the night, Dick being given the spare room. he  
was soon asleep and slept soundly throughout the nig  
for his conscience was not troubled by the death of  
three redcoats at his hands. He did not blame himself  
their death, at all. It was war times, and in such times  
it was every man for himself; the law of self-preservation  
was the supreme law in those days.

After breakfast next morning he bridled and saddled  
horse, and bidding the three good-by, and expressing to  
hope that he would see them all again, he mounted and rei  
away. As he came to a bend in the road a quarter of a m  
distant, he turned in his saddle and waved his hand aw  
the three waved back. The next minute and he was arou  
the bend and out of sight of the friends whom he had  
recently become acquainted with, but who, notwithstanding  
the fact that they were Tories, he thought a great deal a

Dick was in no particular hurry, so he rode slowly,  
lowing his horse to walk. He got to thinking of the aff  
the night before, and of Lucy, and wondering whether a



ot she had really cared for Lieutenant Winters. "I am sorry that I was forced to kill him," the youth thought; he was a good-looking fellow, and if Lucy cared for him, might have made her a good husband. Well, it can't be helped now; that sneak Shenk spoiled everything. I wish I could run across that young rascal; I would tell him what I think of him and give him the worst thrashing he ever had in his life!"

Onward Dick rode, slowly, and he kept up a thinking to such an extent that for once in his life he was off his guard. He was not thinking of the present or paying much attention to his surroundings. The result was that he fell a victim to a well-laid plot to effect his capture.

Joe Shenk had kept his place at the window the night before, watching Dick and the Lintons, and listening to their conversation till they went to bed, and then he took his departure, and made his way slowly and thoughtfully toward his home.

"Jove! but that fellow, Dick Slater, is a fighter!" he said to himself. "Who would have thought that he could offer successful battle to four of the king's soldiers? It was wonderful how he beat them—and he would have killed the four if I hadn't opened the door and told the last one to make his escape. The rebel said he would like to meet me, but I'll take care that he doesn't do anything of the kind. I have no desire to stand up in front of him."

Joe walked slowly and turned over in his mind various plans which he thought might prove successful in causing the capture of Dick Slater, but after giving each plan thorough examination, he was forced to dismiss them all as being worthless.

"There's five hundred pounds on Dick Slater's head," he said to himself; "and I'd like to capture the rebel and secure the money, but I fear such a thing would be an impossibility. It would take a whole company of soldiers to capture that fellow."

Joe reached his home and entered the house and went to his room and to bed, but he could not sleep. The exciting scene he had witnessed and which he had been the cause of, gave him too much to think of, and his mind was too active to make it possible for its owner to go to sleep. The thought of the five hundred pounds that was offered for the capture of Dick Slater kept intruding itself upon the youth's mind also and he rolled and tumbled, and thought and pondered.

It must have been midnight when of a sudden an idea came to Joe. "I'll do it!" he said to himself. "I'll go and see Bill Googer. If anybody can help me, and if any-

body can think of a plan for capturing Dick Slater, Bill can. Yes, I'll go and see him at once. We would have to have all our plans laid before morning, anyway, as Dick Slater will leave Linton's in the morning and we would be too late if I waited till then to go and see Googer."

Joe got up, dressed himself and stole downstairs in his stocking-feet, to keep from waking his parents. As soon as he was out of doors he pulled his shoes on and then hastened away through the timber.

It was quite dark in the timber, but Joe knew the way well, he having visited Bill Googer's cabin many a time, and a walk of twenty-five minutes brought him to the cabin, which stood on the bank of the South Anna River.

Joe knew Googer well and did not hesitate. The moment he reached the cabin he rapped loudly on the door.

"Who's thar?" called out a hoarse voice.

"It's me—Joe Shenk!" was the reply.

"Oh, et's you, is et, Joe?"

"Yes."

"Waal, whut in blazes d'ye mean a-comin' aroun' at this time uv ther night, rousin' er feller outer his sleep?"

"I have something of importance to say to you, Bill."

"Oh, ye hev'?"

"Yes."

"Wouldn't keep till mornin', I s'pose?" in a half-sarcastic, half-grumbling tone.

"No, it would be too late if I waited till morning."

"Oh, all right; I'll open ther door."

There was a fumbling at the door on the inside of the room and then the door opened and a dark form could be seen indistinctly.

"Come in," said Googer, and Joe entered.

"I'll hev er candle lighted in er minnet, Joe."

"All right."

Googer got out his flint, steel and punk and soon had the candle burning. By its light it was possible to get a good look at the man. He was a rather grotesque-looking fellow; he was at least seven feet tall, but was slender, with long arms and exceptionally long legs. His body was short, but very solid, and it was evident that, ungainly as he looked, he would be a hard man to handle in a struggle.

Googer was not a good-looking man, either, by any means. His face was thin, his nose sharp and hawk-like, his eyes deepset and keen, but crafty, and glowing with yellowish light at times. He had fang-like teeth, and when he grinned he was anything but a pleasant-looking sight, to say the least. Googer looked his best when very sober, and his worst when he was in the best humor and in a grinning condition of mind.



"Waal?" he remarked, when the candle was going and he and his visitor had seated themselves.

"You want to know why I have come here at this time of the night?" asked Joe.

"Thet's whut I do; spit et out, Joe. Don't keep me waitin', fur I'm sleepy."

"Well, I was in bed once to-night, but I couldn't sleep, so I happened to think that maybe you could think up some kind of a scheme that I was unable to think of, and made up my mind to come and see you."

"Waal, yer heer; now go ahead an' tell me all erbout et an' ef theer's enny skeemin' ter be done I'll do my bes', ye kin bet on thet."

"That's what I know, Bill; well, I'll go ahead and tell you why I am here." He did so, telling about the combat between Dick Slater and the four redcoats at the Linton home, and all, and explaining how he happened to know that the young stranger was Dick Slater, and all.

Googer listened with open-mouthed interest and uttered sundry exclamations as the story progressed. Especially was this the case when Joe told how Dick had beat the four British soldiers and killed three.

"Blazes! but thet thar Dick Slater mus' be er fighter, an' no mistake!" Googer exclaimed. "I wouldn't hev b'leeved thet wun man could hev licked four British soldiers, no way ye could hev fixed et."

"Well, Dick Slater did it, all right; but he isn't any common man, you know. He's a wonder."

"I should say he is a wonder! I've heerd tell uv 'im afore now, though, an' ther stories I've heerd wuz jes' sech ez would make er feller look fur 'im ter make erbout sech er fight ez this wun ye've be'n 'telling' erbout."

"Yes, you are right; I have heard of him, but I didn't think that the half of what I heard was the truth."

"Ye didn'?"

"No; but I do now."

"I sh'd think ye would."

"Yes; but now, Bill, can't you think of some plan for making a prisoner of this Dick Slater?"

Googer was silent for a few moments, evidently thinking, and presently he said: "Ye say theer's er reward uv five hundred poun's offered fur his capter?"

"Yes."

"Waal, thet's er lot uv munny, hain't et?"

"It is, for a fact."

"More'n I could make huntin' an' trappin' in three or four years."

"You are right."

"And if I think up a plan an' go inter ther affair with ye, whut is et ter be—share and share erlike?"

"Of course."

"All right; thet settles et. I'll think up er skeem, ye bet!"

Googer became silent and sat with his eyes fixed on floor for a minute or more and then got up, filled a pipe with tobacco, lighted it, and, seating himself again, put away at a great rate.

"Now I kin think," he said, with an air of satisfaction, "the mersheenery needed oilin', thet wuz all."

He was silent for perhaps five minutes, and then looked at Joe and said: "This feller, Dick Slater, d think he'll go on toward ther south when he leeves Linton place in the morning?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Waal, I think we kin nab 'im, all right, then."

"How will we do it?"

Googer got up, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, walked over to the farther side of the room, and, reaching up, took down a coil of rope from off a peg. "D'ye see this," he asked.

"Yes." Joe was interested.

"Waal, ye hev seen me use this rope sum, an' know wh I kin do with et."

"Yes, yes! You intend to try to lasso Dick Slater."

Googer nodded. "Thet is jes' whut I'm goin' ter do," he said, confidently.

Joe looked dubious. "I'm afraid it won't work," he said.

"Why so?"

"Because this Dick Slater is as sharp as a steel trap. He won't let you get close enough to him to throw the lass over his head."

"Ef he don't see me he kain't he'p lettin' me git clus er nuff, lin he?"

"No; but how will you keep him from seeing you?"

"Thet's ter be yer part uv ther work."

Joe started, but still looked puzzled. "I don't understand," he said. "Explain."

"All right, Ill do et. D'ye remember thet theer's quit er big bend in ther road er mile an' er ha'f south uv Linton's place?"

"Yes."

"Waal, ye see, we'll go theer airly in ther mornin' an' la in wait fur ther feller."

"Yes."

"I'll hide in ther timber, clust ter whur the bend is s



with quarter Dick Slater hez rid past me I kin step out inter  
r road erhind 'im—d'ye unnerstan'?"

"Ye-es."

"An' now fur yer part. Ye air ter be funder on down  
her road—say er hunderd feet."

"Yes."

"Ye'll be in ther timber berside ther road waitin', an'  
when I giv' ye ther signal ye'll step out inter ther road an'  
um walkin' slowly erlong—toward me an' toward Dick  
Slater when he comes aroun' ther bend, ye unnerstan'?"

"Yes, I understand that."

"And et is ter be yer bizness ter attrack his attenshun,  
e see, an' w'ile ye air torkin' ter 'im I'll jes' slip out from  
among ther trees an' throw ther rope aroun' 'im, d'ye see?"

Googer rubbed his hands with a great show of pleased  
excitement, and grinned at Joe, who was turning the plan  
over in his mind and trying to see if there were any weak  
points in it that would be found by Dick Slater, and that  
would cause the plan to fail.

Presently he looked up, with a pleased look on his face,  
and said: "I believe it'll work."

"Uv course et'll work!" said Googer. "Thet is, ef ye  
lo yer part uv ther work right, an' theer hain't no reezon  
why ye shouldn', so fur ez I kin see."

"Oh, I can do my part, all right."

"Then et's ez good ez done an' over with. Dick Slater  
will be our pris'ner ter-morrer mornin', an' we'll finger  
ther five hunderd poun's uv British gold, er know ther  
reezon w'y!"

"I think we will succeed," coincided Joe. "Well, I had  
better stay here with you till morning, I suppose?"

"Yas, theer hain't no use uv yer goin' back ter yer hum.  
Bersides, ye mought oversleep yerse'f an' not git back in  
time ter he'p me. Stay heer, an' I'll guarantee thet we'll  
be out an' erway before sunup."

So Joe remained at Googer's cabin the rest of the night,  
and was awakened at an early hour to eat a bite of break-  
fast. This finished, the two took their departure, just as  
the first rays of the rising sun were to be seen in the east.

Joe had no weapons, but Googer carried a long, danger-  
ous-looking rifle and the coil of rope—the deadly lasso.

It took them about half an hour to reach their destina-  
tion, and they lost no time in taking up their positions.  
Googer believed in being ready. He took up his position  
just at the point of timber which the road bent around in  
making the turn; from one side he could look northward  
and see any one coming down the road, and by taking a  
dozen steps toward the south he would be at the other

side of the point, and where he could be seen by Joe and  
give the signal.

It was an hour and a half before any one came in sight,  
and then Googer saw a horseman coming down the road.  
He watched the approaching horseman closely and eagerly,  
and soon came to the conclusion that it was the person  
they were looking for—Dick Slater. He waited till the  
horseman had passed him, and was about to round the  
point, and then he stepped quickly to the other side and  
signaled Joe, who at once stepped forth from the timber  
and came walking slowly up the road. Then Googer took  
up his precious lasso, and holding it carefully, in readiness  
for use, he waited for the horseman to pass him.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DICK IS CAPTURED.

The horseman was indeed Dick Slater, and he was rid-  
ing along at a moderate gait, taking things easy and  
thinking. He was not paying much attention to his sur-  
roundings, but when he rounded the point of timber he  
caught sight of Joe Shenk approaching, and was on his  
guard as regarded that individual.

Of course, Dick did not know who Joe was, as he had  
not seen the youth the night before, but he said to himself  
that he did not exactly like the young fellow's looks.

"Still, I guess I need not have any fears of one fellow,"  
the youth thought, and rode slowly onward, keeping a  
wary eye on Joe.

This was, of course, just what Joe wished, and he stop-  
ped just before he met Dick and said: "Good morning!"

"Good morning!" replied Dick.

"Nice morning."

"Yes, so it is." Dick wondered what the youth was  
getting at.

"I'm lookin' for our old cow. She strayed away last  
night. Didn't see anything of her, back up the road,  
did you?"

Dick shook his head. "No, I saw nothing of any  
cow," he replied.

"That so? Then I guess there isn't any use for me to  
go any further in this direction."

"No, I guess not."

While this conversation was going on Googer had not  
been idle. He had emerged from among the trees and  
approached to within thirty feet of the horseman. Here



he paused, and bracing himself he swung the rope around his head two or three times and let fly.

Whiz-z-z-z-z-z! went the rope, and although Dick heard the sound and started to turn his head to see what occasioned it, he was too late. The rope settled over his shoulders, and as it dropped partway to his waist, Googer gave a strong pull, drawing it taut and pinioning Dick's arms to his sides. Then the fellow gave a still stronger jerk and brought Dick out of his saddle and to the ground.

"Jump onto 'im, Joe!" yelled Googer, himself leaping forward. "Don't let 'im git his arms loose!"

Dick realized that he had fallen into a trap, and began to struggle and try to free his arms, but he could not do it—indeed, he was not given time for the two were upon him in an instant and he could do nothing.

The two rolled Dick over and over, drawing the rope around his body and pinioning his arms tightly, and when the end of the rope was tied, Dick was absolutely helpless and was trussed up like an Egyptian mummy.

"Well, what does this mean?" asked Dick, when Googer and Joe had risen to their feet and were looking down upon him with triumphant eyes.

"Et means thet ye're our pris'ner," replied Googer.

"I realize that I am your prisoner; but I don't know what it means. Why have you made me a prisoner?"

"Oh, thet's easy enuff ter answer."

"Answer it, then."

"All right; yer er pris'ner becos ye're Dick Slater!"

Dick started and looked at the two searchingly. "Who says I am Dick Slater?" he asked.

"I do!" said Joe, swelling out his chest and looking very important.

"You?" Dick eyed the youth closely.

"Yes."

"Who are you?"

Joe winked very knowingly. "That's all right," he said; "it doesn't matter who I am. It is enough that I know you are Dick Slater."

"But you don't know anything of the kind."

"Oh, but I do know it, though!"

"How do you know it?"

"I don' see no harm in tellin' 'im, Joe," said Googer; "we've got 'im tight an' fast, an' he kain't git erway."

"That's so; well, then, I heard you tell Lucy Linton that you were Dick Slater."

Dick started. "You heard me tell Lucy Linton that I was Dick Slater?" he remarked, slowly.

"I did."

"When?"

"Yesterday afternoon, just after you had pulled nnyl out of the quicksand."

Dick started, and then he gave Joe a sharp look han said: "I know who you are."

"Who?" asked Joe, grinning.

"You are Joe Shenk."

The Tory youth nodded, still grinning. "You are rig do he acknowledged; "I am Joe Shenk."

"And you are the fellow who caused the trouble at sh Linton's last night."

"I guess I am."

"You thought you would cause me to be captured," shav Dick, smiling in his turn; "but it did not turn out Jo, actly as you had figured it would, did it?"

"Well, no, it didn't, that's a fact. You are a terrig Dick Slater. I didn't know it then, but I know it no Bill and that is the reason we didn't give you any chance ttw morning."

"It was wise in you not to do so."

"Oh, we know it."

"Well, now you have captured me, what are you goimp to do with me?"

"What are we going to do with you?"

"Yes."

"We are going to take you to the British encampmeW and turn you over to General Cornwallis and claim tW reward of five hundred pounds which is offered for yoY capture."

"Oh, that is your scheme, is it?"

"Yes."

Dick looked at the man who had done the main worW in capturing him and asked: "Who are you?"

"Me?" with a grin.

"Yes. What is your name?"

"What d'ye wanter know fur?"

"So that I will know who to look for when I get readn to pay the debt which I owe you two fellows."

"Ther debt whut ye owes us?"

"Yes."

"Whut fur?"

"For capturing me. I always pay my debts. I knoI that I owe Joe, here, quite a debt, which I shall endeavA to pay sooner or later; I owe you quite a debt also and M will wish to pay that, so ask your name, that I may hawe no difficulty in finding you."

"Oh, thet's et, hey?"

"Yes."

"Waal, ez I don't think ye'll ever git loose erg'in teti



"Lennybuddy enny debts, I don' min' tellin' ye my name. Googer—Bill Googer, at yer serviss."

"Thank you, Mr. Bill Cooger. I shall remember that and will square the account with you one of these."

"I don' think ye will."

"I do."

"But, young feller, we're goin' ter take ye ter ther British an' turn ye over inter ther han's uv General Cornwallis; ye know whut thet means, don't ye?"

"Oh, yes; I suppose it would mean trouble for me—but I haven't done it yet."

"No, but we're goin' ter."

"When?"

"Right erway."

"Bill, come here; I want to speak to you," said Joe, and the two went off to one side, a few paces, but not far enough so but they could keep a sharp eye on the prisoner.

"Whut is et, Joe?" asked Googer.

"I want to ask you what about taking him to the British encampment to-day. Do you think we had better do it?"

"Yas; w'y not?"

"I'll tell you why: We are likely to meet some of the British dragoons at any moment."

"Whut uv thet?"

"What of that?"

"Yas."

"Why, don't you see?"

The tall man shook his head. "Kain't say thet I see," replied.

"Well, it's simple enough: The chances are about a hundred to one that they would take the prisoner away from us, take him to the encampment and claim the reward for themselves, while we——"

"I see—w'ile we, who captered 'im, would hev ter git him along without ennythin'."

"That is it, exactly."

The tall man scratched his head and looked dissatisfied and somewhat puzzled. "Whut'll we do, then, Joe?" he asked.

"I'll tell you what I think we had better do."

"All right; go erhead."

"My idea is that it will be a good plan to take Dick to your cabin, keep him there all day, and then when night comes we can make our way to the British encampment and turn the prisoner over to Cornwallis."

"Thet's er good skeem. Ef we meet enny uv ther British on ther road we kin hide an' dodge 'em."

"So we can; and then we will be able to claim the reward of five hundred pounds."

"An' thet's ther main thing, ye bet!"

"Yes, indeed. We are not going to do the dangerous work and then let somebody else get the benefit from it."

"Not much we hain't; an' I'm fur goin' ter my cabin an' stayin' thar till night."

"All right; and the quicker we get started the better. Some British soldiers might happen along at any moment."

"Ye're right; waal, come erlong. Ye ketch ther hoss an' lead 'im, an' I'll march ther pris'ner erlong."

Joe hastened to where the horse stood and had no difficulty in getting hold of the bridle-reins. Googer made his way to where Dick lay, assisted the youth to his feet and taking him by the arm, said: "Cum erlong with me, young feller."

"Where to?" asked Dick.

"Thet don't make no diff'rence; ye hev got ter go whur-ever I want ye ter go, so march erlong."

"Oh, all right; as you say, I am helpless and have to go wherever you say, so lead along and I will be with you."

"Thet's sensible;" and Googer led the way to the timber, and into it, Joe following, leading the horse.

"I thought you were going to take me to the British encampment," said Dick.

"We air—by an' by. We hain't ergoin' ter be in no hurry, though."

"You are going to take your time about it, eh?"

"Yas; ye see, we like ye so well we hain't in no hurry ter part with ye;" and Googer grinned as if he thought he had said something smart.

"Thank you," said Dick, ironically; "I am sorry to say that I cannot return the compliment."

"Oh, thet's all right," with another prodigious grin that showed all his fang-like teeth and made him look hideous; "ye'll like us better w'en ye gits more acquainted with us."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Thar hain't no mistake erbout et."

"Where are you taking me, sure enough?" asked Dick.

"Ye'll fin' out purty soon."

"Oh, all right; if you don't want to tell."

"Oh, thar hain't no speshul reezon w'y I shouldn't tell ye, thet I know uv. We're goin' ter my cabin."

"Oh! Where is it?"

"On ther bank uv ther South Anny, erbout er mile frum heer."

"Ah! And why are you taking me there?"

"Oh, thet's our bizness; becos we wants ter, thet's why."



"I supposed as much; but you said you were going to take me to the British encampment, and when you changed your mind it was only natural that I should be surprised."

"I s'pose so; but thar wuz er good reezon w'y we changed our min's."

"I have no doubt regarding that; and I think I know what the reason is, too."

Googer looked surprised. "Ye think ye know?" he remarked.

"I do."

"Whut d'ye think is ther reezon?"

"You are going to wait till night before making the trip to the British encampment."

"Humph! W'y would we do thet?"

"To avoid meeting any redcoats."

"Ter avoid meetin' enny redcoats?"

"Yes; you are afraid they might take me out of your hands, deliver me to General Cornwallis, and rob you of the reward."

"Say, ye're smart ez er steel trap!" exclaimed Googer, in admiration.

"I am right, then?"

"Yas, yer right."

"I thought so; and I must say that I think you are wise in doing as you are going to do."

"Ye do, hey?"

"I do; for judging by what I have seen of the redcoats, they are quite capable of taking me out of your hands, and robbing you of the reward."

"I guess they'd do et ef they got ther chance."

"Indeed they would."

Googer said no more, and Dick maintained silence, for he was thinking. He was turning the matter over in his mind and wondering if he would not be able to make his escape some time during the day. He would watch for a chance, and if it came he would embrace it, that was certain. One thing, he was glad the two were going to go to the cabin and stay there all day, since it would give him time to study out some plan of procedure.

"I'll make my escape yet!" he said to himself, with grim determination; "they will never deliver me into the hands of the British. I seem to feel it in my bones!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### LUCY AT WORK.

There was some reason why Dick should feel thus, if he had but known it. A very good friend of his was

aware at that very moment that he was a prisoner and was already figuring on rescuing him, or at least in helping him to escape.

Dick had not much more than disappeared around a quarter of a mile from Mr. Linton's house when Lucy caught sight of a pistol lying on the ground. She leaped forward and picked it up.

"It is his pistol! It is Mr. Carroll's!" she cried. "He might need it and need it bad, too. I'll run and get out Selim and ride after Mr. Carroll and return the weapon to him."

"Selim's out in the pasture, as are all the horses," said Mr. Linton; "it would take you half an hour to get him and get started."

"Then I know what I'll do: I'll cut through the woods and try to head him off. You know the road makes a big bend, and by cutting across I may be able to get there in time."

"Yes, if he rides slow."

"Perhaps he may ride slow. He was doing so at first as we could see him."

"Yes; well, hurry, if you are going to try to do this."

"I will." Then Lucy hastened away and soon disappeared in the timber. She knew her way well and traveled onward at a swift pace. As she neared the end of her journey she ran still faster, and arrived at the point which she was aiming just as Bill Googer threw the deer-lasso and caught Dick Slater in its folds.

Had she arrived there a few moments earlier she would undoubtedly have screamed out a warning to Dick, but she had arrived too late for a warning to be of assistance, and as she was an exceedingly shrewd girl, who usually gave her wits about her, she managed to keep from making outcry whatever. She realized, instinctively, that it might be of great benefit to Dick if it was not known she was present and had seen what had taken place, and in this she was right, of course. Had Joe Shenk and Bill Googer been apprised of her presence they would undoubtedly have gone straight for the British encampment and taken chances on being robbed of their prisoners, the redcoats; for they would have been afraid to take the youth to Googer's cabin and keep him all day.

So Lucy kept back out of sight and watched the progress of affairs with starting eyes, and a look of anger on her pretty face. "So you are still at your mean work, you, Joe Shenk?" she said to herself. "Very well, I will see if I can't spoil your plan! Oh, you sneak-scoundrel!" and she shook her fist toward the unconscious Joe.



Lucy was close enough so that she could hear what was said, and when she heard the two tell Dick that they were going to take him to the British encampment and turn him over to General Cornwallis, her heart sank, for she did not think how she could possibly prevent them from going as they said they were going to do.

Then at last they left the road and started through the timber, Googer holding to Dick, and Joe leading the way. Lucy was as delighted as surprised, however, and followed, cautiously, being determined to see where they

They must have changed their minds about going to the British encampment," she told herself. She did not understand it, but was glad that it was so. She was close enough, now, to hear the conversation between Dick and Googer, so did not know that they were headed for the hunter's cabin, but she kept on the track of the party and finally had the satisfaction of seeing them come to a stop in front of a cabin, which stood, as she could see, on the bank of a stream.

"I know," the girl said to herself; "this is the cabin of Googer. I remember, a lot of us young people were here once, fishing in the South Anna, and we passed this cabin and some one said it was Googer's cabin. Then that tall, ugly-looking man must be Googer himself."

The girl watched with eager interest and saw the tall man conduct Dick into the cabin, while Joe led the horse a short distance away and tied the animal to a tree. Then Joe, too, entered the cabin.

A thought struck Lucy: If she could only hear what was said in the cabin! Then she would know what to expect and would know what to do.

With Lucy, to think was to act, and she hastened to make her way around to the rear of the cabin. She was careful to walk on her tiptoes, and make no noise. She was in right against the wall of the cabin, and placing her ear to a crack, looked through. The three men were seated, and were talking. Joe and Googer were congratulating themselves on their smartness in thinking of the plan for making sure of getting the reward offered for Dick's capture, and so it did not take Lucy long to learn that the intention was to keep the prisoner at the cabin all day. This was pleasing news, indeed, and the girl waited to hear no more. She had learned enough; now the thing for her to do was to act.

She stole away, and when she was out of sight of any one who might be looking in her direction from the cabin, she broke into a run and ran as fast as possible. She made up her mind that the best thing she could do would

be to return direct to the road over the path traversed in going to the cabin, for she was not sure she could find her way to her own home if she were to try to cut through the timber and go the shortest way. No, she would return to the road and then take the short cut from there; she was familiar with this and could find her way easily.

Fifteen minutes later she reached the road, and as she did so two men suddenly rode around the point of timber and were upon her before she could get back out of sight among the trees. Seeing that she would be unable to do this, the girl bravely made the best of the situation and stood her ground, gazing at the newcomers unflinchingly as they brought their horses to a stop in front of her.

Somehow, the instant the girl got a good look at the faces of the two horsemen all thought of fear left her. Both were young men of not to exceed twenty years, and were as handsome fellows as any girl would wish to see. They were bronzed, true, as if from much exposure to wind and weather, but their eyes were blue and clear, and there was a merry light in them, too, that was pleasing, to say the least. The youths were dressed in ordinary citizen's clothing, but they sat their saddles as if to the manner born. Both lifted their hats as they brought their horses to a standstill, and, bowing and smiling, said: "Good morning, young lady."

"Good morning," Lucy replied, bowing in response, and showing her teeth in a smile that was captivating, to say the least.

"Do you live near here, miss?" asked one of the young men.

"Yes, sir; I live about a mile back, up the road, in the direction from which you have just come."

"Ah, yes; I remember we passed a house about that distance back."

"That is my home," said Lucy, eyeing the young men, searchingly, and with no little interest, for she was wondering who they could be and what their business was in that part of the country. "They are not British soldiers, I know," she said to herself, "for I have never yet seen a British soldier without a red uniform on. Then who can they be, and what are they? I don't believe they are Tories, for somehow they don't look like they do. They look to me as if they are Northerners."

"I would like to ask you a question, miss," said the horseman who had done most of the talking.

"Very well, sir."

"The question is this: Have you seen a young man, a stranger, anywhere in this vicinity within the last twenty-four hours?"



Lucy started, and a strange thought came to her: What if these two young men were friends of Dick Slater's! What if they should prove to be members of his company of "Liberty Boys"! It would be grand, for then she would have help right at hand and they could go at once and rescue Dick from the hands of Googer and Joe Shenk. This all flashed through her mind in an instant, of course, and then she replied:

"Yes, I saw a young man, a stranger, in this vicinity, within the last twenty-four hours; in fact, such an individual stayed all night at our house."

"Ah! that is good news!" the horseman cried. "And he has gone on his way, then? He departed this morning? Will you tell us if we are on the right track to overhaul him?"

The girl made a restraining gesture and smiled at the same time. "Wait," she said; "are you two young gentlemen friends of Dick Slater?"

The youths started and exchanged glances. "I beg your pardon, miss," said the spokesman, "but will you tell me what you know of Dick Slater?"

"Considerable, perhaps. The young gentleman, the stranger you asked me about was Dick Slater, was he not?"

The horseman hesitated. "I do not like to make admissions which might at some future time be damaging," he said, slowly; "now, if I could be sure that you were a true friend to——"

"You may be sure that I am a true friend to Dick Slater!" said the girl, earnestly and warmly. "I ought to be, for he saved my life no longer ago than yesterday afternoon."

"Lucky dog!" exclaimed the young man who had not done any of the talking so far, and his exclamation was accompanied by such a look of admiration and significance that Lucy blushed in spite of herself. She knew that the words, tone and look was a compliment, and as the young man was very handsome, of course it was at least not displeasing to her.

"Here, you keep still!" laughed the other youth, slapping his comrade on the shoulder. "No remarks, old man!"

"You want to do all the talking to her yourself," grumbled the other.

"Of course; who wouldn't?" And then to Lucy: "You say that Dick Slater saved your life yesterday afternoon?"

The girl bowed. "He did," she replied.

"How do you know the person who saved your life was Dick Slater?"

"Because he told me that was his name;" and they smiled.

"He told you that he was Dick Slater, did he?" inquired the horseman. "I don't understand it."

"I do," remarked the other youth, coolly; "it was natural he should tell her his name when she asked him. He couldn't have told her a falsehood, could he? I must have told her my name, and so would you, Bob. You'd tell her you would."

"Speak for yourself," grinned the one addressed by Bob; "you would have told her your name, I doubt not, and a whole lot of other things as well—such as how beautiful she was and what adorable eyes she had, and so on and so on!"

"I have no doubt that I would have done so," was the quiet reply, and the look which the youth gave Lucy which caused her to blush furiously, was proof sufficient that he was telling the truth.

"Well, since you know the young man was Dick Slater, can you tell us which way to go to find him?" the youth called Bob asked.

"I can," Lucy replied; "I know where Dick Slater is at this very moment."

"You do?" eagerly.

"Yes."

"Tell us where he is."

"A prisoner in the hands of a couple of villains!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE RESCUE AND ESCAPE.

Exclamations escaped the lips of both the young men.

"A prisoner!"

"You don't mean it!"

The girl nodded. "I do mean it," she declared; "the villains make a prisoner of him, and I followed them and saw where they took him, and was hurrying home to try to see if I could get help and go and rescue him; but now, if you two young men are his friends—"

"We are the best friends he has in the world, miss!" interrupted the one called Bob; "I am Bob Estabrook, your right-hand man and almost brother, and this is Tom Harris, another member of the company of 'Liberty Boys.' We are the best friends Dick has in the world, and if it will be so kind as to show us the way to the spot where



held a prisoner we will be a thousand times obliged to you."

"I shall be only too glad to show you the way," the girl said, slowly; "but do you think that the two of you will be a match for the two villains? I fear they will fight desperately rather than give up the prisoner, for they wish to turn him over to General Cornawallis and secure the five hundred pounds reward that is offered for his capture."

"So that is why they captured Dick, is it?"

"Yes."

"Who are they—redcoats?"

"No; one is a hunter and trapper named Bill Cooger. He has a reputation as being a desperado. The other is a young man of the neighborhood, a Tory. He is not so dangerous."

"Oh, we can handle them, all right, in open fight, if necessary," said Bob, confidently; "but perhaps we may be able to take them by surprise. They don't know that we know they are holding Dick a prisoner, do they?"

"No; and you are right. I think you can take them by surprise, for I slipped up to the back of the cabin and listened to their conversation, and they did not suspect my presence."

"That is all right, then," said Bob; "we will be able to take them by surprise and will have them at our mercy before they know it."

"Well, if you two can fight anything like Dick Slater then they would not stand much chance against you," the girl said.

"Well, we are pretty good on the fight," smiled Bob; "but we don't claim to be the equal of Dick Slater. He is a wonder. But did you see him do some fighting?"

"Yes, indeed; last night there came four British soldiers to our house, and in a combat with them Dick killed three, and the fourth only escaped through the help of an out-lander—the young fellow who helped capture Dick this morning, in fact."

"Oh, Dick is a wonder when it comes to a fight of any kind," said Tom Harris; "we can't come up to him, but the two of us will agree to whip the two villains who have Dick a prisoner, eh, Bob?"

"Yes; and now let us be moving. How is the way—through heavy timber, naiss?"

"Yes."

"Then let's leave our horses here, Tom."

"All right; we can lead them into the timber a ways and tie them."

This was done, and then the three set out, Lucy in the lead, the youths close behind.

There was not much talking indulged in during the walk, which took up about twenty minutes; at the end of that time Lucy came to a stop and pointed across a little opening to where a small cabin stood on the bank of a stream of water.

"There is the cabin," said Lucy.

"They are in there, eh?" remarked Bob.

"Yes."

"Good! I judge that we had better put your plan into execution—go around to the rear of the cabin, I mean, and see how the land lies before making any break of any kind."

"That will be best, I think," agreed Tom, while Lucy nodded assent.

The three made a half circuit and presently reached the rear of the cabin. They had advanced very carefully and had not made any noise that could possibly have been heard within the cabin. Now they placed their eyes at the crack between two of the logs and looked in.

It was as Lucy had said. There sat Dick, with a rope wound around his arms and body; he was absolutely helpless. And there were the two captors—the youth and the tall, ungainly trapper. The latter was most industriously puffing away at a big pipe, while the youth was watching him, and occasionally saying something, to which the big fellow replied with a grunt.

Bob and Tom took a good look through the crack, then drew and cocked their pistols and began stealing around toward the front of the cabin. Lucy followed, for she wanted to see it all.

It did not take long to reach the front of the cabin, and as it was a warm day the door was open; the two who had captured Dick did not think that there was danger that they might be disturbed. They felt absolutely secure, hence the carelessness regarding the open door.

It made things simple and easy for Bob and Tom, however, and the first intimation Joe Shenk and Bill Cooger had that any one was within a mile of them was when the two youths stepped quietly into the cabin and stood there, with extended pistols.

"It's Bob and Tom!" cried Dick. "Hurrah! I'm saved!"

"Furies!" roared Googer. "Who air ye fellers, enny-way?—an' whut d'ye mean by comin' inter er feller's cabin in enny sech fashun ez thet?"

Joe Shenk turned pale and shrunk back, looking wildly about as if seeking for an avenue of escape.

"It means that your little game is up—burst sky-high!" said Bob, coolly. "Don't make an attempt to get hold of your rifle, my long-legged friend, or I shall be under the



necessity of putting a bullet through you!" as Googer made a motion toward reaching for his rifle.

"He'll shoot, Bill!" cried Joe. "These are some more of the 'Liberty Boys,' and it won't do to fool with them."

"That's the truth, if you never told it before," smiled Bob. "We are some more of the 'Liberty Boys,' and it won't do to fool with us. I would just as lieve put a bullet through fellows of your kidney as look at you, so surrender!"

"W-we surrender!" stammered Joe.

"All right; place your hands behind your backs."

The two obeyed.

"Now, turn your backs toward us."

Again the two did as ordered.

"Now, Tom, go and free Dick; then cut the rope in two and tie the wrists of those two scoundrels."

"All right." Tom hastened to do as told, and it took but a minute to loosen the rope which was tied around Dick. Then he cut the rope in two and he and Dick quickly bound the wrists of Shenk and Googer.

"There, I guess we have turned the tables on you fellows!" remarked Bob, grinning at the prisoners. "How do you like it?"

"Curse ye; I'll have ther lives uv all uv ye fur this!" snarled Googer.

"Threatened men live long," laughed Bob.

Dick now seized Bob's hand and shook it, and then the same with Tom. "How in the world happens it that you two are down here?" he asked. "And how did you find me, here?"

"We wouldn't have found you, Dick; it was Miss Lucy, here, who told us where you were and guided us here."

Then Dick caught sight of Lucy for the first time, and, leaping forward, seized her hand and pressed it warmly. "So I owe my rescue to you, Lucy!" he exclaimed. "Well, that cancels my saving your life, for you have certainly saved mine."

"I am so glad!" murmured the girl, blushing with pleasure, and then as she caught the eyes of Tom Harris upon her she blushed even more.

"Great guns!" thought Tom. "Can it be that she is in love with Dick? I hope not; but I am afraid she is—for how could she help being? Dick is as handsome a young fellow as ever lived, and is brave and dashing—and he saved her life, and she has practically saved his. Yes, I see it all; my cake is dough! She will never care for me while Dick is around; but, hold on—Dick has a sweetheart, Bob's sister, and maybe there will be a chance for me, after all. I won't give up all hope, anyway."

Dick happened to catch sight of Tom's face, and was a splendid hand at reading expression he jumped once to the conclusion that Tom was in love with Lucy. "Good!" he said to himself, "I am glad of that, and Lucy will take a liking to him, for I should feel very if I should be the means of causing her pain or sorrow. I will do all I can to bring them together and make like each other—though in Tom's case it will be an arduous task, I am sure."

"What shall we do with these rascals, Dick?" Bob, indicating Shenk and Googer.

"I hardly know, Bob; I suppose we will just have to leave them here, tied up as they are, with a warning to behave themselves in the future."

"I think the better plan would be to take them down the river, tie rocks to them and throw them in!" said Bob, with such a sober face that the two became alarmed.

"That's what I think, Dick!" said Tom, who was already ready to help Bob carry out a joke of this kind.

"No, no! Don't do that!" cried Joe Shenk. "Please don't! I'll promise to be good! I won't never do anything against the patriots again if you'll let me live free!"

"Humph! You'll remember that till you are again and then you'll forget all about it," said Dick severely.

"No, no! I'll remember it always and I'll keep my promise, too!"

"How about you, Mr. Googer?"

"Waal," was the slow reply, "I hain't much on making promusses, but I will say this, thet I don't keer no more about which side wins in this heer war. I wouldn't raised my han' erg'inst ye jes' becous ye wuz er rebel wuz ther reward I wuz arter."

"That sounds honest," said Dick, approvingly; "I like to hear a man tell the truth. I believe you have done in this instance, and for that reason we will spare your lives. We will leave you here, tied as you are, but you can easily walk to the home of some neighbor and get your wrists freed."

"Much obleeged ter ye," said Googer.

"So am I!" said Joe Shenk.

Dick now turned his eyes upon that youth. "Shenk," he said, sternly, "you are the fellow who caused the trouble at Mr. Linton's last night!"

"Ye-yes, I am," the youth stammered; "and I'm sorry I did it."

"Will you give me your promise that you will not bother Mr. Linton's folks again, in any way, shape or form?"



"Yes, yes! I promise!"

"All right; see that you keep your promise. If you break it I shall make it my business to hunt you down and kill you as I would a dog! Do you hear?"

"Ye-yes!"

"All right; don't forget, for if you do it means sure death for you!"

"I—I won't forget."

"See that you don't! Well, boys, and Miss Lucy, I guess we might as well be go——"

Dick was interrupted by a startled cry from Lucy.

"Look!" she cried, pointing; "yonder come some British soldiers!"

The youths looked in the direction indicated, and sure enough they saw a score or more of redcoats coming toward the cabin at a run.

"We must get away from here in a hurry!" cried Dick.

"Come around the cabin and down to the river bank," said Bob; "I saw a boat there and we can make our escape that."

The three youths and Lucy leaped through the doorway and ran around the cabin, paying no attention to the cries of "Stop! stop!" from the redcoats. The latter were within pistol-shot distance, but the youths did not think they would fire on account of the girl, and in this they were right. Doubtless the redcoats thought they would be able to capture the four, anyway.

Dick and his companions were soon at the water's edge, and, as Bob had said, found a boat there.

"Help Lucy in, Tom," ordered Dick, and he busied himself with cutting the painter, while Tom hastened to obey his order. Then the three youths leaped in, pushing the boat off as they did so, and seizing the oars, Bob and Tom began rowing lustily, while Dick steered and Lucy, sitting in the bow, watched the approaching redcoats anxiously. The South Anna River was a hundred yards wide at this point, and the youths managed to reach mid-stream before the time the redcoats got down to the water's edge.

"Come back here!" roared one of the redcoats. "Come back at once or we will open fire!"

"And run the risk of killing the young lady?" called out Dick, in bitter scorn. "Are you such brutes and cowards as that? Shame upon you!"

"No, we won't have to fire upon you; we have a boat!" one redcoat cried; and then the four saw the British soldiers wading along the shore to where a little creek emptied into the river. Here a boat was drawn out from under some trees, and three redcoats leaped into it and set out in pursuit.

"Good enough!" said Dick. "There are only three of them coming, and I think we are more than a match for that number."

"Well, it will be strange if we can't handle them!" said Bob. "What do you think, Dick? Had we better fire upon them or not?"

"I don't think it will be wise to do so, Bob. If they refrain from firing we will do so, too. If we open fire they will return it and then Lucy might be hit by a bullet."

"That's so; well, we'll wait till they come up to us—if they succeed in catching us, and then we will meet them with swords, oars or any such weapons as they elect to use."

"Yes, and I believe they are going to be able to overtake us; their boat is a better one than ours."

"Yes," said Tom; "it is built for speed, while this one is not."

"This one does not seem to have been built for much of anything," said Bob, in a tone of disgust; "it is a libel on the name of boat."

Bob and Tom kept on rowing, however, for while they did not think it possible they could get away from their pursuers, they wished to get so far away from the cabin and the rest of the redcoats that the three in the pursuing boat would not receive reinforcements.

On down the river they went, and the pursuing boat drew nearer and nearer. "Stop!" called out the redcoat leader. "Stop and surrender! You cannot escape!"

"We have no intention of surrendering!" called back Dick.

"What kind of fellows do you think we are?" asked Bob, ironically. "We are not the surrendering kind."

"You will either surrender or die!" the redcoat cried, arrogantly.

"Don't be too sure of that!" called out Dick; then he drew his sword—he had taken the sword that had belonged to Lieutenant Winters, and it had not been taken from him by Shenk and Googer—and said to Bob and Tom, in a low voice: "When they come alongside, rise up suddenly and attack them with the oars. I will use my sword."

"All right," the youths replied.

The pursuing boat was close at hand, now, and the leading redcoat had a sword in his hand and was flourishing it menacingly.

"Stop and surrender!" he again called out.

"Never!" cried Dick. "You will have to fight for it, Sir Redcoat!"

"All right, fight it is, then!" was the reply. "Remember, you bring this on yourselves by refusing to surrender!"



"Oh, don't you worry about us!" said Bob, defiantly; "I reckon we know how to take care of ourselves."

The boats were soon close together—side by side, in fact—and a hot fight took place between the "Liberty Boys" and the redcoats.

The girl watched the combat in silent terror, and it was plain that she had fears for the safety of her companions. It did not take long for her to see that the three youths were amply able to take care of themselves, however, for they were too much for the redcoats, boastful as their leader had been. The instant the boat was alongside, Bob and Tom and Dick leaped to their feet, the two former with oars in their hands, Dick with the sword, and they attacked the redcoats with such fierceness as to quickly turn the combat against them.

Tom was the first to score, for he knocked the sword out of the hand of one of the redcoats and then gave him a fierce punch in the stomach with the end of the oar, doubling him up and sending him into the river, kersplash!

"Hurrah!" the youth cried. "I've settled one of them! Give it to them, boys!" and he began helping Bob. The sudden accession to the number of his opponents disconcerted the redcoat and just as he glanced involuntarily toward Tom, Bob gave him a blow alongside the head with the oar and knocked him headlong out of the boat.

"That settles two of them!" cried Bob. "Now give it to the other scoundrel!"

Dick and the redcoat leader, who was a lieutenant, were at it with the swords, hot and heavy. Dick was easily holding his own, but the boats were drifting apart, and they would soon be unable to reach each other. Bob fixed matters nicely by punching the lieutenant in the stomach with the end of the oar, and knocking him out of the boat. Then he drew the boat close alongside with the oar, leaped into it and said: "You two fellows row that boat and I'll row this one, and we'll go on down the river and get clear away from these fellows and the others, too."

"That is a good plan," agreed Dick, and he and Tom seized the oars and began rowing, while Bob did the same in the other boat. The lieutenant came to the top of the water, gasping for breath, and made a grab at the boat Bob was in, but the youth shoved him away with an oar and passed him. Of the other two redcoats, only one was to be seen, and he was laboring heavily, and it looked very doubtful regarding whether or not he would be able to swim to the shore.

"Serve them right if they all three drown!" said Bob, grimly.

"Well, they will have to look out for themselves," Tom said; "they can't expect us to do it for them."

"That's right," said Tom, and he glanced at Lucy to see if she approved of the way the three were doing. Obviously Lucy did approve, for she said:

"Oh, I'm so glad that you beat them! I'm so glad!"

The youths rowed steadily onward, and the last they saw of the two redcoats they were making strenuous efforts to swim to the shore.

A few minutes later they came to the point where the road crossed the river. Here was a ford, and the water was so shallow the bottoms of the boats grated on the rocks.

"I think we had better go ashore, anyway," said Dick. "How far is it to your home from here, Lucy?"

"A mile and a half."

"Well, then, let's go ashore and strike for Lucy's home."

The others consented, and they rowed the boats to the shore and leaped out. Then they set out up the road on a rapid walk. When they came to where Bob and Tom had left their horses, the two youths brought the horses back and led them, and the journey was continued.

Twenty minutes later they reached the Linton home, where they were given a hearty welcome; indeed, Mr. and Mrs. Linton had become very anxious regarding Lucy, she having been away much longer than they had expected she would, and they were delighted to see her safely back again.

Lucy hastened to tell them the story of what had happened to Dick Slater and herself and the other two "Liberty Boys," and she was just finishing the story when it suddenly broke off and gave utterance to a cry of alarm.

"Look! look!" she exclaimed. "There come the Brigands now! Oh, what will you do, Dick—Tom! You can't hope to fight all of them!"

## CHAPTER IX.

### "THE LIBERTY BOYS' HOT TIME."

When the redcoats rushed to the cabin where they found the three youths and the girl, not all of them were on in pursuit of the four: Several paused and looked through the doorway. Of course, they caught sight of Joe Shenk and Bill Cooger, who had leaped to their feet and were looking eagerly out.

"Hello! here, who are you fellows, and how happened that you are trussed up in this fashion!" one of the redcoats cried.



"Those scoundrels did it!" cried Joe. "Free us, quick!"  
 "Yas, cut ther ropes!" cried Googer; then he bent over and whispered in Joe's ear: "Don' tell these here fellers who Dick Slater is, fur ef ye do we won't never get no chance ter rake in thet five hunderd poun's."

Joe nodded, and the redcoats then cut the ropes and left the cabin and went down to the shore of the river. They got there just as the leader of the redcoats had called to Dick and his companions to stop or they would charge upon them, and Googer hastened to inform the lieutenant that there was another boat in the mouth of a little creek a hundred yards down stream.

This was sufficient for the redcoat, and he and some of his men hastened down and got the boat out and leaped and followed the other boat, as we have seen. The main body of redcoats, accompanied by Joe Shenk and Bill Googer, followed as fast as they could along the shore, but the stream was running swiftly they could not keep up with the boats, and dropped behind. They were more than a quarter of a mile away when the redcoats in the pursuing boat overtook the "Liberty Boys" and met with such a disastrous defeat, and they hastened their footsteps and reached the point opposite where the lieutenant and the other soldier were struggling in the water, and several threw off their outer clothing and swam in and pulled the two almost exhausted men ashore.

The lieutenant was about as mad a man as ever lived, and he breathed forth threats of what he would do to the daring youths who had handled himself and two comrades in such a rough manner.

"Oh, if I could only get within reach of them!" he said; "I would make them wish they had never been born!"

"I think I can tell you where you will find them," said Joe Shenk, eager to do something to injure Dick Slater, whom he had conceived a great hatred.

"You think so?" eagerly.

"Yes."

"Where? Tell me quickly!"

"I think you will find them at the home of the girl that with them."

The lieutenant started, and his face brightened. "That's a reasonable supposition," he said; "I am inclined to think you are right. Do you know where the girl lives?"

"Yes."

"How far from here is it?"

"A mile and a half."

"That isn't far."

"About half an hour's walk."

"A little more than that; but no matter. We will head

for the home of the girl at once. What is her name, do you know?"

"Yes; it is Linton."

"All right; well, men, get ready to make a march of a mile and a half."

"Do you suppose there is any chance that Harper was not drowned?" asked one of the soldiers.

"No chance of it at all," was the reply; "I saw him when he struck the water. He went down like a stone. One of those scoundrels hit him a terrible crack alongside the head with an oar, and he was unconscious, and so drowned at once."

"I suppose you are right."

"Yes; we'll never see poor Harper again—but we can avenge his death! Forward, all—and you, young man, take the lead and guide us to the house."

"All right, sir; come on, everybody!"

Joe led the way through the timber, Cooger and the redcoats following. They walked at a fairly good pace, but it took them about three-quarters of an hour to reach the edge of the clearing in which stood Mr. Linton's house.

"That's Mr. Linton's house, and there are those very fellow you are after, too, or I am mightily mistaken!" said Joe, and the redcoats looked and uttered cries of excitement.

"You are right!"

"It's them, sure enough!"

"Yes, there isn't any doubt about it!"

"Right," said the lieutenant; "and I think we will get them this time. Are you ready, men?"

"All ready."

"Good! Forward, then, at a run and keep your eyes on our game. It must not be allowed to escape us, this time."

Then the redcoats left the shelter of the trees and dashed forward and ran toward the house with all their speed.

As soon as they saw they had been seen, they set up a wild yell and brandished their weapons.

"There is no use for you to try to escape, this time!" the lieutenant cried. "We have run you down, and you cannot get away!"

It really looked as if the British officer was speaking the truth, but Dick Slater and his two comrades were not the youths to tamely surrender as long as there was a chance for escape.

"Quick! away we go, boys!" cried Dick. "If we can reach the timber, yonder, they can't catch us!"

Then the three bounded away and this action on their part was greeted with still louder yells from the redcoats.



"Stop!" the lieutenant cried. "Stop and surrender! You can't escape us!"

But he might as well have talked to the wind, for all the good it did. Dick Slater and his two companions were not accustomed to allowing anybody else to decide matters for them. They were quite capable of doing it themselves, and they believed they could escape.

They had almost reached the timber when suddenly a party of at least one hundred horsemen came riding down the road. The instant the eyes of Dick and his two comrades rested upon the newcomers, cries of delight escaped them.

"The 'Liberty Boys'!" cried Bob. "Hurrah!"

"Now we'll show the redcoats a thing or two!" cried Tom.

"Indeed we will!" agreed Dick; and waving his hand to the newcomers he cried: "See those redcoats, boys? Charge the scoundrels!"

A wild cheer went up from the "Liberty Boys" and they urged their horses forward, straight toward the redcoats, who, seeing that they were in danger, whirled and ran back toward the timber at the top of their speed. At the same instant a party of horsemen rode out into view a quarter of a mile to the south of the house, where the road made the turn. These horsemen wore the scarlet uniforms of the British dragoon, and there looked to be at least a hundred of them.

Bob was the first to see them. "Great Scott, Dick! look yonder!" he cried. "There is a good-sized party of redcoats! It looks to me as if we were going to have a hot time here, and no mistake!"

"I guess you are right, Bob," said Dick; and then he yelled to his "Liberty Boys" again, and pointed toward the party of horsemen. The reply was another wild cheer and the youths dashed onward, straight toward the newcomers.

"Oh, say, there is going to be the hottest kind of a hot time, right away; and we are on foot and can't be mixed in it from the first!" groaned Bob.

"Come on," called out Dick; "there are two horses, yonder, by the house. We can mount them and get into the fight pretty quickly."

"That's so; I forgot about those horses!"

Then the three youths dashed toward the house, and reaching it Dick and Bob leaped into the saddles of the two horses and rode away at a gallop, to join their comrades.

Meanwhile the redcoats and the "Liberty Boys" had come together with a mighty crash. There was the crack!

crack! crack! of pistols, wild yells, curses, the neighing and snorting of terrified horses—it was a scene of excitement and confusion.

The contending forces fought with the fury of demons, but the "Liberty Boys" seemed to be the more determined fighters, and they fought like fiends. Suddenly Dick and Bob came riding through the struggling, fighting crowd, and as they put in an appearance wild yells of delight went up from their comrades.

"Dick Slater! Dick Slater! Three cheers for Slater!" was the cry, and the cheers were given with a will. And then on the heels of the cheers came the thrilling war-cry: "Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

The appearance of Dick and Bob seemed to put new life and energy into the "Liberty Boys," and they doubled their exertions, with the result that the redcoats were beaten back in spite of all they could do.

It was a "hot time," sure enough, as Bob had said it would be, and while men fell on both sides, yet the "Liberty Boys" were, indeed, terrible fighters, and the redcoats were finding this out, to their cost.

At last the redcoats, who had lost at least half their force, became demoralized, and, turning their horses, fled back in the direction from which they had come, belabored their horses furiously in their efforts to get the best speed out of them.

The "Liberty Boys" pursued the fleeing enemy a distance of half a mile, and then stopped and came back. A survey was taken of the scene of the battle and it was found that seven "Liberty Boys" had been killed and eight wounded, while thirty-two redcoats had been killed and twenty-two had been wounded. The British had been badly whipped.

Dick and his comrades carried the eight wounded "Liberty Boys" to Mr. Linton's house, and that gentleman said they could stay there until they were well, and that they would receive the best of care.

Then the seven dead youths were buried, and although saddened by the death of their comrades the "Liberty Boys" were yet very well satisfied, for they had created a great deal more havoc among the ranks of the enemy.

Among the wounded redcoats was one who had been knocked insensible by a blow from the butt of a musket. He was now almost as good as new, and Dick told him to mount his horse and go after his fleeing comrades.

"Tell them to come back and look after their dead and wounded," said Dick; "we will agree not to fire upon them or molest them in any way while so engaged. The work



re, must be attended to, and you certainly cannot expect to do it for you."

"I'll bring them back," the soldier said, and, mounting, rode away at a gallop.

He was forced to ride clear to the South Anna River before overtaking his demoralized comrades. Here they paused, first, to let their horses drink, and then, feeling that they were not pursued and were safe, they had gone on. They were grouped about, discussing the terrible defeat which they had experienced when the messenger arrived. He told them what Dick had said, and they mounted their horses and rode back toward the scene of the late encounter.

When they arrived there they were not molested at all; they were left free to bury their dead and carry their wounded away. In order to accomplish this last they caught the horses which had been ridden by the men who were dead and wounded, and by tying blankets between the animals, in twos, hammock-ambulances were made and the wounded men were placed in these. The cavalcade did not start immediately, however; the lieutenant who was in command, and who was really a brave fighting officer, and had fought fiercely and managed to escape being wounded, strode forward and confronted Dick Slater—the "Liberty Boys" having stood near, witnesses of the work of the redcoats.

The lieutenant, when he was within a few feet of Dick, dismounted and saluted, Dick returning the salute.

"You are Dick Slater?" the lieutenant asked.

"I am," Dick replied.

"The commander of this force, here?" indicating the "Liberty Boys."

"I am," said Dick.

"Very well, then; Dick Slater, as commander of the British force which you see here I herewith challenge you to a duel to the death!"

## CHAPTER X.

### THE BRITISH LIEUTENANT'S DEFEAT.

Dick was surprised, and looked it. He stared at the lieutenant a few moments, in amazement, and then said: "You wish to fight a duel with me?"

"I do!" the lieutenant's tone was firm, his bearing manly.

"But I don't see why we should fight a duel. I have nothing against you, lieutenant. Our men have met in

a combat, true, but it was a fair and square fight, and there is no cause for ill feeling on either side."

"But I have a score to settle with you," the lieutenant insisted.

"I don't understand."

"Don't you remember the affair in the boats?"

Dick smiled. "Oh, yes, I remember that."

"Well, we were engaged in a combat, you and I, and we did not get to finish it. One of your men poked me in the stomach with an oar and knocked me out of the boat. Had you not had assistance I would have killed you."

"Well, I am not so sure of that," said Dick, dryly.

"Then meet me in a duel with swords, and the matter can easily be determined," cried the lieutenant, eagerly.

"Oh, say! let me meet him, Dick!" said Bob. "I can trim him up in about three shakes, and not more than half try, either!"

"I have no quarrel with you," said the young officer, with dignity; "I have challenged Captain Slater."

"Well, challenge me!" said Bob.

"Hush, Bob," said Dick; "if any one fights the lieutenant it will be me, of course, since it is me that he wishes to have the duel with. But I assure you, sir, that it is folly. Why should we meet here, in cold blood, and try to kill each other? Let us dismiss the subject and save our strength for legitimate use in battles."

The lieutenant shook his head. "I am going to meet you in a duel—unless you are a coward and refuse to meet me," he declared; "one or the other of us must die!"

"But it is a foolish notion, I tell you, lieutenant. It is no way for commanders of forces in the field to do."

"Must I pull your ears or slap your face to make you get up sufficient courage to agree to meet me?" the lieutenant asked, sneeringly.

A peculiar glint appeared in the gray-blue eyes of Dick Slater. It was the danger signal, had the lieutenant but known it. "I would not advise you to try anything of the kind," said Dick, calmly, with a peculiar intonation to his voice.

"That's right!" said Bob Estabrook, with a grin; "if you were to do that, lieutenant, I'm afraid you wouldn't feel in a condition for fighting a duel under a week or two!"

"Bah!" said the lieutenant, with a sneering look at Bob. Then to Dick he said: "Then you will meet me?"

"Since you are so insistent, yes. I have nothing against you, but if you are determined to commit suicide, I suppose there is no stopping you."

"Suicide—bah! I will show you, you boastful rebel!"

Dick smiled. "I suppose there is no need of wasting



any time about this matter," he said; "you are ready, now, are you?"

"I am; and the quicker we get to work the better it will suit me."

"I am quite willing to have it over and off my mind, too," said Dick. As he spoke he drew his sword and stepped out into the middle of the road.

The lieutenant hastened to draw his sword and take his place in front of Dick. "There will be no interference?" he asked, with a glance toward the "Liberty Boys."

"None," replied Dick; "your men will not interfere, I know, and neither will mine."

"Very well; then look out for yourself, Sir Rebel!"

"The same advice to you, Sir Redcoat!"

The next instant the swords crossed and then—clash! clash! clash! the weapons went, sparks flying from the highly tempered steel.

To say that the spectators—the redcoat on one hand and the "Liberty Boys" on the other—watched the duel with interest, is stating the case very mildly. They stared at the combatants with eager gaze, but if anything the redcoats seemed to be the more eager, even anxious. Somehow, the "Liberty Boys" did not seem to have much fear regarding the result of the encounter; they were cool and seemingly not anxious, but of course they watched the affair with interest, as was only natural.

Perhaps the most interested person among all the spectators was Lucy Linton; she stood, leaning against the fence, and her eyes shone with an excited light, and her lips were parted and her teeth set tightly together. Tom Harris had managed to get around until he occupied a place beside Lucy.

"Oh, I hope that Dick—Mr. Slater will win!" breathed Lucy. "I hope he will beat the British soldier, but I—I'm afraid that—that——"

"You need not be afraid for Dick, Miss Lucy," said Tom, confidently.

"Oh, you think he will beat the lieutenant?" breathed Lucy.

"I am sure of it."

"But—but—the lieutenant is a good swordsman; all British officers are good swordsmen."

"So is Dick a good swordsman, Lucy. He is a wonder. I don't believe there is an officer in the British army that is his equal."

"Oh, I hope that is the case! I hope he will beat the lieutenant!"

"I wonder if she would want me to win as sincerely as she wants Dick to?" Tom asked himself. "Jove! if I

thought so I would wish I was in Dick's place—though I don't know whether I could hold my own against the lieutenant as well as Dick is doing, or not."

It is doubtful if he could have done so, for he was not nearly so good a swordsman as was Dick, and the lieutenant was really a first-class hand with the weapon. He was not, however, Dick's equal with the sword, and it did not take him long to discover this fact. He had imagined, before the combat started, that he was the "rebel's" superior, but when they got at it he was surprised to find that said "rebel" was wonderfully clever both in defensive and offensive work.

This knowledge caused him to pale, and Dick saw his change of color and understood. The "Liberty Boy" smiled and said: "What is the matter, lieutenant? You look as if you were not feeling well? If such is the case, say so, as I do not wish to have it said of me that I fought with and overcome a sick man."

The lieutenant muttered something under his breath, and then said, huskily: "I am not sick, and if you triumph over me, no one need accuse you of having beaten a sick man. Don't worry about me; I will soon prove to you that I am well and hearty!"

"Oh, very good, lieutenant! I simply wished to know the truth of the matter, that is all. I have no desire to pit myself against one who is not himself, physically."

"You will find I am quite myself in every way; I am more than a match for any rebel that ever lived!"

"But that is merely the unwarranted enthusiasm of youth and inexperience, my dear lieutenant," said Dick calmly; "there are, to the best of my knowledge and belief, about ten thousand 'rebel' soldiers who could prove themselves your superior as a warrior."

"Bah! you are boasting."

"Oh, no; such is really my honest belief."

"You had better prove yourself to be my superior before speaking of tens of thousands who would overcome me!" sneeringly.

"Very well; I will do so. This has continued about long enough, anyway, and might as well be brought to an end. I have taken your measure, lieutenant, and will now show you that you are not such a wonderful man with the sword as you have long thought yourself to be. I rather think the lesson you are about to receive will do you good."

Then Dick began a fierce attack on his opponent. He thrust with such wonderful rapidity that the lieutenant became dazed; in and out flashed Dick's weapon; it described all sorts of wonderful figures in the air and at last, after a series of manœuvres, the lieutenant's sword



knocked out of his hand and several feet away, while stood, helpless and trembling. Doubtless he expected he would be run through; no doubt he thought his was near, but Dick was not that kind of a man. Heathed his sword, motioned toward the lieutenant's sword, and said:

Your life is mine if I wished to take it, lieutenant; I do not. I would scorn to do such a thing; it would be like assassination, to me, and you are free to go your way. There is your sword; get it, and then go!"

The lieutenant, pale and discomfited-looking, stepped where his sword lay, picked it up, sheathed it, and then, turning to Dick, said: "I thank you for sparing my life. Good day!"

Then he took his place at the head of the party of redcoats, and gave the order for it to march. The men obeyed, and as the redcoats moved away, they were forced to listen to three cheers for Dick Slater, followed by the war-cry of "Liberty Boys," of "Down with the king! Long live liberty!"

Mrs. Linton, who had retired to the house when the combat between the redcoats and "Liberty Boys" began, and who had come out only to see Dick and the lieutenant in the duel, had again retired to the house. But now that the duel was ended, and the British had taken their departure, she again came forth and although quite pale, and that she had not fainted.

"I believe I am beginning to get used to bloodshed," she said; "it doesn't frighten me quite so much as it did at first, but I hope I will not be called upon to witness a great deal of it as I would rather not have to get used to it."

Tom Harris stuck close to Lucy's side, and Dick, who noticed this was glad of it; he was even more pleased when he noted the fact that Lucy did not seem to be displeased by the attention which the handsome young "Liberty Boy" was showing her. There was no doubt regarding the fact that she liked Dick Slater, but it is possible that her instinct told her she could not win him, and as she was beginning to like curly-headed, handsome-faced, jolly Tom, and could see that he more than liked her, she decided to do the wise thing and let her liking be centred on that one. At any rate, she smiled on Tom and made him the happiest fellow in Old Virginia.

Joe Shenk and Bill Cooger had watched the fight between the redcoats and "Liberty Boys" from a safe distance, they being hidden behind trees at the edge of the clearing. Of course, they had hoped that the British would

win, but had been disappointed, for the British had been given a terrible thrashing and had fled from the field as fast as they could make their horses go.

"What shall we do?" asked Joe.

"Waal," said Googer, slowly and reflectively, "ye kin do whutever ye want, but ez fur me I guess I'll go back hum an' start ter work, huntin' an' trappin'. Five hundred pound's would be er big lot uv munny ter git hol' uv, but w'en et happens thet in order to git ther munny ye hev ter capter thet feller, Dick Slater, ye kin' jes' count me out! I berleeve I'd ruther git rich slow an' shore."

"Well, if you are not going to make any more attempts to capture him then I shall not do so, either," said Joe.

"An' I think yer wise in not tryin' ter do et, Joe, my boy. In my 'pinion thet thar Dick Slater is not jes' ther kin' uv er feller to go foolin' aroun'!"

Then the two parted, Googer to return to his cabin, and to his work of hunting and trapping, and Joe to return to his home.

The "Liberty Boys" remained in the vicinity for some time, and had several hot skirmishes with small parties of the British, but they were unanimous in saying that the fight they had had with the British near Mr. Linton's house was about the hottest, while it lasted, that they had never engaged in. As Bob had said, they had had an exceedingly "hot time."

Tom Harris made such progress with Lucy Linton that when he went away from that part of the country he carried the beautiful girl's promise that when the war was over if he would come for her he could have her. And when the war ended Tom lost no time in striking a bee line for the home of Lucy Linton, away down in Old Virginia, where the "Liberty Boys" had had such lively times.

## THE END.

The next number (76) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' DARING SCHEME; OR, THEIR PLOT TO CAPTURE THE KING'S SON," by Harry Moore.

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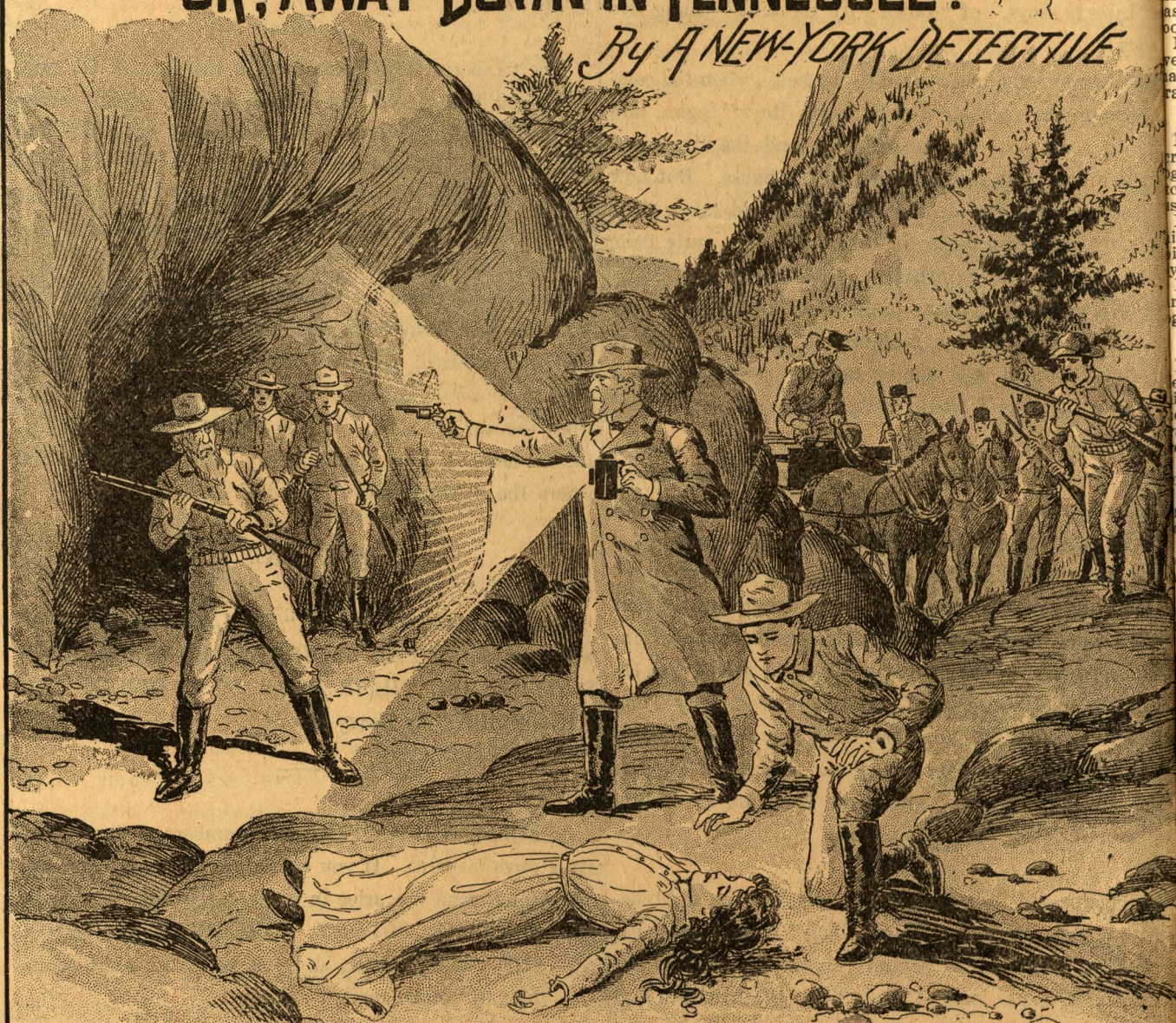
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